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THE LIFE
OF
GEORGE WASHINGTON

VOLUME ONE

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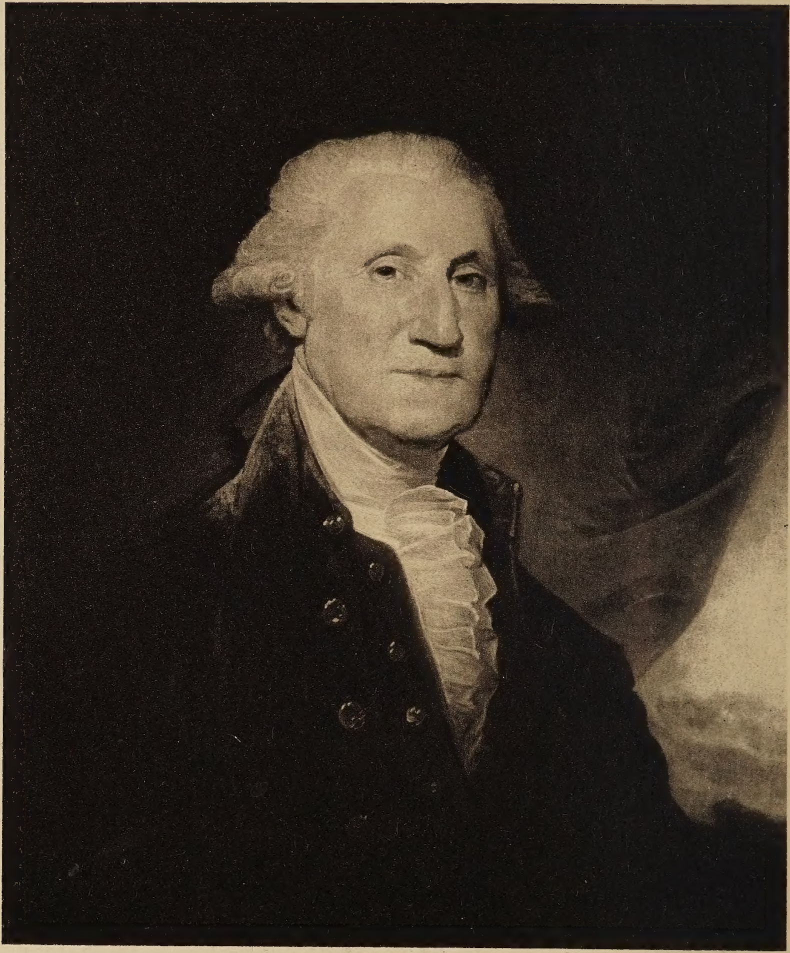

G^o Washington

from a painting by Gilbert Stuart

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THE LIFE
OF
GEORGE WASHINGTON

COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE AMERICAN FORCES

DURING THE WAR WHICH ESTABLISHED THE INDEPENDENCE OF HIS COUNTRY

AND FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

COMPILED UNDER THE INSPECTION OF

THE HONOURABLE BUSHROD WASHINGTON

From Original Papers

BEQUEATHED TO HIM BY HIS DECEASED RELATIVE

BY

JOHN MARSHALL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

HON. HENRY ST. GEORGE TUCKER

FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

New York
WALTON BOOK COMPANY
MCMXXX

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The text followed in this issue of Marshall's Life of Washington is that of the edition of 1848, published in Philadelphia.

No alterations have been made in the text; the peculiarities and idiosyncrasies of the author's style have been retained unchanged.

The original work had no index. As it is of special importance as a reference book, this deficiency has been supplied.

INTRODUCTION

The union of two such names as Washington and Marshall in any publication must naturally excite the interest of the American public, and that will be so even though it means a new edition of a book published in 1832.

The purpose, therefore, of the publishers to bring out a new edition of John Marshall's "Life of Washington" will naturally create great interest in the minds of the reading public, and this will be greatly enhanced, after the lapse of nearly one hundred years, if the reader keeps in mind how the development of the United States in that great period, in commerce, education, and the arts and sciences, and especially in the evolution of our constitutional history, has been effected by the initial actions of the first President of the United States, and their effect upon the constitutional development of these several subjects; and in view of John Marshall's unparalleled position in the development of the Constitution of the country, it will be of exceeding interest, also, to the student of American history to see how far the views of the great Chief Justice, as expressed in his opinions after the close of Washington's Administration, coincided with those of the President in those matters.

This book reveals the most meticulous care on the part of the great Chief Justice in recording the Administration of President Washington, and many of the subjects referred to by him will seem to the reader unnecessary to be noted; but one motive which seemed to fill the public mind of that day more than any other was the sincere and patriotic sentiment which pervaded the leaders that the foundations of the new Republic were to be laid deep in a determined effort that the great principles of civil liberty and of national honor should be protected and preserved at any cost; and in their various ramifications, embracing some things of importance and others which seem to be trivial, the Chief Justice seemed to feel it necessary to record them all.

It was natural that, in the beginning of the Government, the chief motive for which was the regulation of commerce between the States and foreign countries, that subject should have been especially noticed. Questions of taxation arising under the first tariff bill, our foreign relations, especially with Great Britain and France, embracing the matter of treaties, and notably under Washington's Administration the Jay Treaty, were subjects much discussed. The relief which was found by the new government in the regulations of commerce by the Congress of the United States was fully and generally satisfactory. Yet, at that distant day none living, not even the great Chief Justice himself, could have dreamed of the future development of that subject, of which he was to become the masterful interpreter.

The life of the greatest American, written by the greatest American jurist, cannot, and will not, fail to attract the attention throughout the United States of thoughtful men and women, who will find in it a mine of interesting facts and suggestions on the early administration of the Government.

HENRY ST. GEORGE TUCKER.

Lexington, Virginia,
November 6, 1929.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE author persuades himself that no apology will be required for offering to his fellow-citizens a revised edition of the LIFE OF GENERAL WASHINGTON.

The period during which he lived, and acted a conspicuous part in American affairs, was the most interesting of American history. The war of our revolution, the very instructive interval between its termination and the adoption of our present constitution, the organization of the new government, and the principles which were developed in its first operation, form great epochs, claiming the attention not only of every statesman, but of every American unwilling to remain ignorant of the history of his country, and the character of his countrymen.

The transactions of this period constitute the subject of the following pages. In compiling them, the Author has relied chiefly on the manuscript papers of General Washington. These have supplied the requisite information respecting all facts immediately connected with himself. But as many occurrences are unavoidably introduced in which he acted no direct part, it has been drawn occasionally from other sources.

The history of General Washington, from the time of his appointment to the command of the American armies, is the history of his country. Yet the peculiar character of biography seemed to require that his private opinions, and his various plans, whether carried into execution or neglected, should be given more in detail than might be deemed proper in a general history. Copious extracts have, therefore, been made from his correspondence. Many political events, too, especially during the war, while his particular duties were of a military character, seem less appropriate to his biography, than to a professed history of the United States. These are alluded to incidentally.

The great questions which were debated in Congress during the first operations of the government, have not yet lost their interest. Deep impressions were then made respecting the subjects themselves, and the persons by whom the various important propositions then discussed were supported or opposed, which are not yet entirely effaced. Justice to the patriot statesmen, who then devoted their time and talents to the public service, requires that the reasons on which they acted should be known. The arguments, therefore, for and against those measures which had most influence over the opinion of the nation, are substantially stated. They are necessarily collected from the papers of the day.

Other transactions of immense importance at the time, conveying lessons as instructive as experience can give, in which almost every individual took some part, passed under the view of the nation, and are detailed, in some degree, from the observation of the author himself. In stating these, which belong equally to history and biography, his endeavour has been to represent sentiments and actions, leaving it to the reader to draw his own conclusions from them.

The work was originally composed under circumstances which might afford some apology for its being finished with less care than its importance demanded. The immense mass of papers which it was necessary to read, many of them interesting when written, but no longer so, occupied great part of that time which the impatience of the public could allow for the appearance of the book itself. It was therefore hurried to the press without that previous careful examination, which would have resulted in the correction of some faults that have been since perceived. In the hope of presenting the work to the public in a form more worthy of its acceptance, and more satisfactory to himself, the author has given it a careful revision. The language has been, in some instances, altered—he trusts improved; and the narrative, especially that part of it which details the distresses of the army during the war, relieved from tedious repetitions of the same suffering. The work is reduced in its volume, without discarding any essential information.

THE LIFE
OF
GEORGE WASHINGTON

CHAPTER I

GEORGE WASHINGTON, the third son of Augustine Washington,
was born on the 22d of February, 1732, near the
banks of the Potowmac, in the county of Westmore- 1732.
land, in Virginia. His father first married Miss Butler, who died in 1728; leaving two sons, Lawrence and Augustine. In 1730, he intermarried with Miss Mary Ball, by whom he had four sons, George, John, Samuel and Charles; and one daughter Betty, who intermarried with Colonel Fielding Lewis, of Fredericksburg.

His great grand-father, John Washington, a gentleman of a respectable family, had emigrated from the north of England about the year 1657, and settled on the place where Mr. Washington was born.

At the age of ten years he lost his father. Deprived of one
parent, he became an object of more assiduous atten-
tion to the other; who continued to impress those 1742.
principles of religion and virtue on his tender mind, which constituted the solid basis of a character that was maintained through all the trying vicissitudes of an eventful life. But his education was limited to those subjects, in which alone the sons of gentlemen, of moderate fortune, were, at that time, generally instructed. It was confined to acquisitions strictly useful, not even extending to foreign languages.

In 1743, his eldest brother intermarried with the daughter of the Honourable George William Fairfax, then a member of the council; and this connexion introduced Mr. Washington to Lord Fairfax, the proprietor of the Northern Neck 1749. of Virginia, who offered him, when in his eighteenth year, an appointment as surveyor, in the western part of that territory. His patrimonial estate being inconsiderable, this appointment was readily accepted; and in the performance of its duties, he acquired that information respecting vacant lands, and formed those opinions concerning their future value, which afterwards contributed greatly to the increase of his private fortune.

Those powerful attractions which the profession of arms presents to young and ardent minds, possessed their full influence over Mr. Washington. Stimulated by the enthusiasm of military genius, to take part in the war in which Great Britain was then engaged, he had pressed so earnestly to 1747. enter into the navy, that, at the age of fifteen, a midshipman's warrant was obtained for him. The interference of a timid and affectionate mother deferred the commencement, and changed the direction of his military career. 1751. Four years afterwards, at a time when the militia were to be trained for actual service, he was appointed one of the Adjutants General of Virginia, with the rank of Major. The duties annexed to this office soon yielded to others of a more interesting character.

France was beginning to develop the vast plan of connecting her extensive dominions in America, by uniting Canada with Louisiana. The troops of that nation had taken possession of a tract of country claimed by Virginia, and had commenced a line of posts, to be extended from the lakes to the Ohio. The attention of Mr. Dinwiddie, Lieutenant Governor of that Province, was attracted to these supposed encroachments; and he deemed it his duty to demand, in the name of the King his master, that they should be suspended.

This mission was toilsome and hazardous. The Envoy would be under the necessity of passing through an extensive and almost unexplored wilderness, intersected with rugged mountains and considerable rivers, and inhabited by fierce savages, who were either hostile to the English, or of doubtful attachment. While the dangers and fatigues of this service deterred others from undertaking it, they seem to have possessed attractions for Mr. Washington, and he engaged in it with alacrity.

On receiving his commission, he left Williamsburg and arrived, on the 14th of November, at Wills' creek, then the extreme frontier settlement of the English, 1753. where guides were engaged to conduct him over the Alleghany mountains. After surmounting the impediments occasioned by the snow and high waters, he reached the mouth of Turtle creek, where he was informed that the French General was dead, and that the greater part of the army had retired into winter quarters. Pursuing his route, he examined the country through which he passed with a military eye, and selected the confluence of the Monongahela and Alleghany rivers, the place where fort Du Quesne was afterwards erected by the French, as an advantageous position, which it would be adviseable to seize and to fortify immediately.

After employing a few days among the Indians in that neighbourhood, and procuring some of their chiefs to accompany him, whose fidelity he took the most judicious means to secure, he ascended the Alleghany river. Passing one fort at the mouth of French creek, he proceeded up the stream to a second, where he was received by Monsieur Le Gardeur de St. Pierre, the commanding officer on the Ohio, to whom he delivered the letter of Mr. Dinwiddie, and from whom he received an answer with which he returned to Williamsburg. The exertions made by Mr. Washington on this occasion, the perseverance with which he surmounted the difficulties of the journey, and the judgment displayed in his conduct towards the Indians, raised him in the public opinion, as well as in that of the 1754. Lieutenant Governor. His journal,[1] drawn up for the inspection of Mr. Dinwiddie, was published, and impressed his countrymen with very favourable sentiments of his understanding and fortitude.

As the answer from the commandant of the French forces on the Ohio indicated no disposition to withdraw from that country, it was deemed necessary to make some preparations to maintain the right asserted over it by the British crown; and the assembly of Virginia authorized the executive to raise a regiment for that purpose, to consist of three hundred men. The command of this regiment was given to Mr. Fry;[1] and Major Washington was appointed Lieutenant Colonel. Anxious to be engaged in active service, he obtained permission, about the beginning of April, to advance with two companies to the Great Meadows in the Alleghany mountains. By this movement he hoped to cover that frontier, to make himself more perfectly acquainted with the country, to gain some information respecting the situation and designs of the French, and to preserve the friendship of the savages. Soon after his arrival at that place, he was visited by some friendly Indians, who informed him that the French, having dispersed a party of workmen employed by the Ohio company to erect a fort on the south-eastern branch of the Ohio, were themselves engaged in completing a fortification at the confluence of the Alleghany and Monongahela rivers: a detachment from which place was then on its march towards his camp. Open hostilities had not yet commenced; but the country was considered as invaded: and several circumstances were related, confirming the opinion that this party was approaching with hostile views. Among others, it had withdrawn itself some distance from the path, and had encamped for the night in a bottom, as if to ensure concealment. Entertaining no doubt of the unfriendly designs with which these troops were advancing, Lieutenant Colonel Washington resolved to anticipate them. Availing himself of the offer made by the Indians to serve him as guides, he proceeded through a dark and rainy night to the French encampment, which he completely surrounded. At daybreak, his troops fired and rushed upon the party, which immediately surrendered. One man only escaped capture; and M. Jumonville alone, the commanding officer, was killed.

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[1] See note, No. I, at the end of the volume.

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[1] With an unaffected modesty which the accumulated honours of his after life could never impair, Major Washington, though the most distinguished military man then in Virginia, declined being a candidate for the command of this regiment. The following letter written on the occasion to Colonel Richard Corbin, a member of the council, with whom his family was connected by the ties of friendship and of affinity, was placed in the hands of the author by Mr. Francis Corbin, a son of that gentleman.

"Dear Sir,—In a conversation at Green Spring you gave me some room to hope for a commission above that of a Major, and to be ranked among the chief officers of this expedition. The command of the whole forces is what I neither look for, expect, or desire; for I must be impartial enough to confess, it is a charge too great for my youth and inexperience to be intrusted with. Knowing this, I have too sincere a love for my country, to undertake that which may tend to the prejudice of it. But if I could entertain hopes that you thought me worthy of the post of Lieutenant-colonel, and would favour me so far as to mention it at the appointment of officers, I could not but entertain a true sense of the kindness.

I flatter myself that under a skilful commander, or man of sense, (which I most sincerely wish to serve under,) with my own application and diligent study of my duty, I shall be able to conduct my steps without censure, and in time, render myself worthy of the promotion that I shall be favoured with now."

The commission he solicited was transmitted to him by Mr. Corbin, in the following laconic letter:

"Dear George,—I inclose you your commission. God prosper you with it.
Your friend, RICHARD CORBIN."

While the regiment was on its march to join the detachment advanced in front, the command devolved on Lieutenant Colonel Washington by the death of Colonel Fry. Soon after its arrival, it was reinforced by two independent companies of regulars. After erecting a small stockade at the Great Meadows, Colonel Washington commenced his march towards fort Du Quesne, with the intention of dislodging the French from that place. He had proceeded about thirteen miles, when he was met by some friendly Indians, who informed him that the French and their savage allies, "as numerous as the pigeons in the woods," were advancing rapidly to meet him. Among those who brought this information, was a trusty chief, only two days from the fort on the Ohio, who had observed the arrival of a considerable reinforcement at that place, and had heard their intention of marching immediately to attack the English, with a corps composed of eight hundred French and four hundred Indians. This intelligence was corroborated by information previously received from deserters, who had reported that a reinforcement was expected.

The troops commanded by Colonel Washington were almost destitute of provisions; and the ground he occupied was not adapted to military purposes. A road at some distance, leading through other defiles in the mountains, would enable the French to pass into his rear, intercept his supplies, and starve him into a surrender, or fight him with a superiority of three to one.

In this hazardous situation, a council of war unanimously advised a retreat to the fort at the Great Meadows, now termed fort Necessity where the two roads united, and where the face of the country was such as not to permit an enemy to pass unperceived. At that place, it was intended to remain, until reinforcements of men, and supplies of provisions, should arrive.

In pursuance of this advice, Colonel Washington returned to July 2. fort Necessity, and began a ditch around the stockade. Before it was completed, the French, amount- July 3. ing to about fifteeen hundred men, commanded by Monsieur de Villier, appeared before the fort, and immediately commenced a furious attack upon it. They were received with great intrepidity by the Americans, who fought partly within the stockade, and partly in the surrounding ditch, which was nearly filled with mud and water. Colonel Washington continued the whole day on the outside of the fort, encouraging the soldiers by his countenance and example. The assailants fought under cover of the trees and high grass, with which the country abounds. The engagement was continued with great resolution from ten in the morning until dark; when Monsieur de Villier demanded a parley, and offered terms of capitulation. July 4. The proposals first made were rejected; but, in the course of the night, articles were signed, by which the fort was surrendered, on condition that its garrison should be allowed the honours of war—should be permitted to retain their arms and baggage, and be suffered to march without molestation into the inhabited parts of Virginia. The capitulation being in French—a language not understood by any person in the garrison, and being drawn up hastily in the night, contains an expression which was inaccurately translated at the time, and of which advantage has been since taken, by the enemies of Mr. Washington, to imply an admission on his part, that Monsieur Jumonville was assassinated. An account of the transaction was published by Monsieur de Villier, which drew from Colonel Washington, a letter to a friend, completely disproving the calumny. Though entirely discredited at the time, it was revived at a subsequent period, when circumstances, well understood at the date of the transaction, were supposed to be forgotten.[1]

The loss of the Americans in this affair is not ascertained.

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[1] See note, No. II, at the end of the volume.

From a return made on the 9th of July, at Wills' Creek, it appears that the killed and wounded, of the Virginia regiment, amounted to fifty-eight; but the loss sustained by the two independent companies is not stated. That of the assailants was supposed to be more considerable.

Great credit was given to Colonel Washington by his countrymen, for the courage displayed on this occasion. The legislature evinced its satisfaction with the conduct of the whole party, by passing a vote of thanks[1] to him, and the officers under his command; and by giving three hundred pistoles, to be distributed among the soldiers engaged in the action.

The regiment returned to Winchester, to be recruited; soon after which it was joined by a few companies from North Carolina and Maryland. On the arrival of this reinforcement, the Lieutenant Governor, with the advice of council, regardless of the condition or number of the forces, ordered them immediately to march over the Alleghany mountains, and to expel the French from fort Du Quesne, or to build one in its vicinity.

August.

The little army in Virginia, which was placed under the command of Colonel Innes, from North Carolina, did not, as now reinforced, exceed half the number of the enemy, and was neither provided with the means of moving, nor with supplies for a winter campaign. With as little consideration, directions had been given for the immediate completion of the regiment, without furnishing a single shilling for the recruiting service. Although a long peace may account for many errors at the commencement of war, some surprise will be felt at such ill-considered and ill-judged measures. Colonel Washington remonstrated strongly against these orders, but prepared to execute them. The assembly, however,

September.

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[1] To the vote of thanks, the officers made the following reply:

"We, the officers of the Virginia regiment, are highly sensible of the particular mark of distinction with which you have honoured us, in returning your thanks for our behaviour in the late action; and can not help testifying our grateful acknowledgments, for your "*high sense*" of what we shall always esteem a duty to our country and the best of kings.

"Favoured with your regard, we shall zealously endeavour to deserve your applause, and, by our future actions, strive to convince the worshipful house of burgesses, how much we esteem their approbation, and, as it ought to be, regard it as the voice of our country.

Signed for the whole corps,

GEO: WASHINGTON."

having risen without making any provision for the farther prosecution of the war, this wild expedition was laid aside, and the Virginia regiment was reduced to independent companies.

In the course of the winter, orders were received "for settling the rank of the officers of his majesty's forces when serving with the provincials in North America." These orders directed "that all officers commissioned by the King, or by his General in North America, should take rank of all officers commissioned by the Governors of the respective provinces: and farther, that the general and field officers of the provincial troops should have no rank when serving with the general and field officers commissioned by the crown; but that all captains, and other inferior officers of the royal troops, should take rank over provincial officers of the same grade, having senior commissions."

Strong as was his attachment to a military life, Colonel Washington possessed in too eminent a degree the proud and punctilious feelings of a soldier, to submit to a degradation so humiliating as was produced by his loss of rank. Professing his unabated inclination to continue in the service, if permitted to do so without a sacrifice too great to be made, he retired indignantly from the station assigned him, and answered the various letters which he received, pressing him still to hold his commission, with assurances that he would serve with pleasure, when he should be enabled to do so without dishonour.

His eldest brother had lately died, and left him a considerable estate on the Potowmac. This gentleman had served in the expedition against Carthagena; and, in compliment to the admiral who commanded the fleet engaged in that enterprise, had named his seat *Mount Vernon.* To this delightful spot Colonel Washington withdrew, resolving to devote his future attention to the avocations of private life. This resolution was not long maintained.

1755. March.

General Braddock, being informed of his merit, his knowledge of the country which was to be the theatre of action, and his motives for retiring from the service, gratified his desire to make one campaign under a person supposed to possess some knowledge of war, by inviting him to enter his family as a volunteer aid-de-camp.

Having determined to accept this invitation, he joined the

June.

Commander-in-chief, immediately after his departure from Alexandria, and proceeded with him to Wills' Creek. The army, consisting of two European regiments and a few corps of provincials, was detained at that place until the 12th of June, by the difficulty of procuring wagons, horses, and provisions. Colonel Washington, impatient under these delays, suggested the propriety of using pack horses instead of wagons, for conveying the baggage. The commander-in-chief, although solicitous to hasten the expedition, was so attached to the usages of regular war, that this salutary advice was at first rejected; but, soon after the commencement of the march, its propriety became too obvious to be longer neglected.

June 15.

On the third day after the army had moved from its ground, Colonel Washington was seized with a violent fever, which disabled him from riding on horseback, and was conveyed in a covered wagon. General Braddock, who found the difficulties of the march greater than had been expected, continuing to consult him privately, he strenuously urged that officer to leave his heavy artillery and baggage with the rear division of the army; and with a chosen body of troops and some pieces of light artillery, to press forward with the utmost expedition to fort Du Quesne. In support of this advice, he stated that the French were then weak on the Ohio, but hourly expected reinforcements. During the excessive drought which prevailed at that time, these could not arrive; because the river Le Bœuf, on which their supplies must be brought to Venango, did not then afford a sufficient quantity of water for the purpose. A rapid movement therefore might enable him to carry the fort, before the arrival of the expected aid; but if this measure should not be adopted, such were the delays attendant on the march of the whole army, that rains sufficient to raise the waters might reasonably be expected, and the whole force of the French would probably be collected for their reception; a circumstance which would render the success of the expedition doubtful.

This advice according well with the temper of the Commander-in-chief, it was determined in a council of war, held at the Little Meadows, that twelve hundred select men, to be commanded by General Braddock in person, should advance with the utmost expedition against fort Du Quesne. Colonel Dunbar was to remain with the residue of the two regiments, and all the heavy baggage.

Although this select corps commenced its march with only thirty carriages, including ammunition wagons, the hopes which had been entertained of the celerity of its movements were not fulfilled. "I found," said Colonel Washington, in a letter to his brother, written during the march, "that instead of pushing on with vigour, without regarding a little rough road, they were halting to level every mole-hill, and to erect bridges over every brook." By these means they employed four days in reaching the great crossing of the Yohiogany, only nineteen miles from the Little Meadows.

June 19.

Colonel Washington was obliged to stop at that place;—the physician having declared that his life would be endangered by continuing with the army. He obeyed, with reluctance, the positive orders of the general to remain at this camp, under the protection of a small guard, until the arrival of Colonel Dunbar; having first received a promise that means should be used to bring him up with the army before it reached fort Du Quesne.

The day before the action of the Monongahela he rejoined the general in a covered wagon; and, though weak, entered on the duties of his station.

In a short time after the action had commenced, Colonel Washington was the only aid remaining alive, and unwounded. The whole duty of carrying the orders of the Commander-in-chief, in an engagement with marksmen who selected officers, and especially those on horseback, for their objects, devolved on him alone. Under these difficult circumstances he manifested that coolness, that self possession, that fearlessness of danger which ever distinguished him, and which are so necessary to the character of a consummate soldier. Two horses were killed under him, and four balls passed through his coat; but, to the astonishment of all, he escaped unhurt,—while every other officer on horseback was either killed or wounded. "I expected every moment," says an eye-witness,[1]

July 9.

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[1] Dr. Craik.

"to see him fall. His duty and situation exposed him to every danger. Nothing but the superintending care of Providence could have saved him from the fate of all around him."

At length, after an action of nearly three hours, General Braddock, under whom three horses had been killed, received a mortal wound; and his troops fled in great disorder. Every effort to rally them was ineffectual until they had crossed the Monongahela, when, being no longer pursued, they were again formed. The general was brought off in a small tumbril by Colonel Washington, Captain Stewart of the guards, and his servant. The defeated detachment retreated with the utmost precipitation to the rear division of the army; soon after which, Braddock expired. In the first moments of alarm, all the stores were destroyed, except those necessary for immediate use; and not long afterwards, Colonel Dunbar August. marched the remaining European troops to Philadelphia, in order to place them in, what he termed, winter quarters.

Colonel Washington was greatly disappointed and disgusted by the conduct of the regular troops in this action. In his letter to Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie, giving an account of it, he said, "They were struck with such an inconceivable panic, that nothing but confusion and disobedience of orders prevailed among them. The officers in general behaved with incomparable bravery, for which they greatly suffered; there being upwards of sixty killed and wounded—a large proportion out of what we had.

"The Virginia companies behaved like men, and died like soldiers; for, I believe, out of three companies on the ground that day, scarce thirty men were left alive. Captain Peronny, and all his officers down to a corporal, were killed. Captain Poulson had almost as hard a fate for only one of his escaped. In short, the dastardly behaviour of the regular troops, (so called,) exposed those who were inclined to do their duty, to almost certain death; and, at length, in spite of every effort to the contrary, they broke, and ran as sheep before hounds; leaving the artillery, ammunition, provisions, baggage, and in short every thing a prey to the enemy: and when we endeavoured to rally them, in hopes of regaining the ground, and what we had left upon it, it was with as little success as if we had attempted to have stopped the wild bears of the mountains, or the rivulets with our feet: for they would break by, in spite of every effort to prevent it."[1]

Colonel Washington had long been the favourite soldier of Virginia; and his reputation grew with every occasion for exertion. His conduct in this battle had been universally extolled;[2] and the common opinion of his countrymen was, that, had his advice been pursued, the disaster had been avoided. The assembly was in session, when intelligence was received of this defeat, and of the abandonment of the colony by Colonel Dunbar. The legislature, perceiving the necessity of levying troops for the defence of the province, determined to raise a regiment, to consist of sixteen companies, the command of which was offered to Colonel Washington; who was also designated, in his commission, as the Commander-in-chief of all the forces raised and to be raised in the colony of Virginia. The uncommon privilege of naming his Field Officers was added to this honourable manifestation of the public confidence.

Retaining still his prepossessions in favour of a military life, he cheerfully embraced this opportunity of re-entering the army. After making the necessary arrangements for the recruiting service, and visiting the posts on the frontiers, which he placed in the best state of defence of which they were susceptible; he set out for the seat of government, where objects of the first importance required his attention; but was overtaken below Fredericksburg by an express, carrying the intelligence, that a large number of French and Indians, divided into several parties, had broken up the frontier settlements; were murdering and capturing men, women, and children; burning their houses, and destroying their crops. The troops stationed among them for their protection, were unequal to that duty; and, instead of being able to afford aid to the inhabitants, were themselves blocked up in their forts.

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[1] In another letter, he says, "We have been beaten, shamefully beaten—shamefully beaten by a handful of men, who only intended to molest and disturb our march! Victory was their smallest expectation! But see the wondrous works of Providence, the uncertainty of human things! We, but a few moments before, believed our numbers almost equal to the force of Canada; they only expected to annoy us. Yet, contrary to all expectation and human probability, and even to the common course of things, we were totally defeated, and have sustained the loss of every thing."

[2] In a sermon preached not long after the defeat of General Braddock, the Rev. Mr. Davies, speaking of that disaster, and of the preservation of Colonel Washington, said: "I can not but hope that Providence has preserved that youth to be the saviour of this country." These words were afterwards considered as prophetic; and were applied by his countrymen to an event very opposite to that which was contemplated by the person who uttered them.

Colonel Washington hastened back to Winchester, where the utmost confusion and alarm prevailed. His efforts to raise the militia were unavailing. Attentive only to individual security, and regardless of the common danger, they could not be drawn from their families. Instead of assembling in arms, and obtaining safety by meeting their invaders, the inhabitants fled into the lower country, and increased the general terror. In this state of things, he endeavoured to collect and arm the men who had abandoned their houses, and to remove their wives and children to a distance from this scene of desolation and carnage. Pressing orders were at the same time despatched to the newly appointed officers, to forward their recruits; and to the county lieutenants, east of the Blue Ridge, to hasten their militia to Winchester: but before these orders could be executed, the party which had done so much mischief, and excited such alarm, had re-crossed the Alleghany mountains.

1756.
April.

Early in the following spring, the enemy made another irruption into the inhabited country, and did great mischief. The number of troops on the regular establishment was totally insufficient for the protection of the frontier, and effective services from the militia was found to be unattainable. The Indians, who were divided into small parties concealed themselves with so much dexterity, as seldom to be perceived until the blow was struck. Their murders were frequently committed in the very neighbourhood of the forts; and the detachments from the garrisons, employed in scouring the country, were generally eluded, or attacked to advantage. In one of these skirmishes, the Americans were routed, and Captain Mercer was killed. The people either abandoned the country, or attempted to secure themselves in small stockade forts, where they were in great distress for provisions, arms, and ammunition; were often surrounded, and sometimes cut off. Colonel Washington was deeply affected by this state of things. "I see their situation," said he, in a letter to the Lieutenant Governor, "I know their danger, and participate their sufferings, without having it in my power to give them farther relief than uncertain promises. In short I see inevitable destruction in so clear a light, that unless vigorous measures are taken by the assembly, and speedy assistance sent from below, the poor inhabitants now in forts must unavoidably fall, while the remainder are flying before the barbarous foe. In fine, the melancholy situation of the people; the little prospect of assistance; the gross and scandalous abuses cast upon the officers in general, which is reflecting upon me in particular for suffering misconduct of such extraordinary kind; and the distant prospect, if any, of gaining reputation in the service, cause me to lament the hour that gave me a commission, and would induce me, at any other time than this of imminent danger, to resign, without one hesitating moment, a command from which I never expect to reap either honour or benefit; but, on the contrary, have almost an absolute certainty of incurring displeasure below, while the murder of helpless families may be laid to my account here."

Colonel Washington had been prevented from taking post at fort Cumberland by an unfortunate and extraordinary difficulty, growing out of an obscurity in the royal orders, respecting the relative rank of officers commissioned by the king, and those commissioned by the governor. A Captain Dagworthy, who was at that place, and of the former description, insisted on taking the command, although it had been committed to Lieutenant Colonel Stevens; and, on the same principle, he contested the rank of Colonel Washington also. This circumstance had retained that officer at Winchester, where public stores to a considerable amount were deposited, with only about fifty men to guard them. In the deep distress of the moment, a council of war was called, to determine whether he should march this small body to some of the nearest forts, and, uniting with their petty garrisons, risk an action; or wait until the militia could be raised. The council unanimously advised a continuance at Winchester. Lord Fairfax, who commanded the militia of that and the adjacent counties, had ordered them to his assistance; but they were slow in assembling. The unremitting exertion of three days, in the county of Frederick, could produce only twenty men.

The incompetency of the military force to the defence of the country having become obvious, the assembly determined to augment the regiment to fifteen hundred men. In a letter addressed to the house of burgesses, Colonel Washington urged the necessity of increasing it still farther, to two thousand men; a less number than which could not possibly, in his opinion, be sufficient to cover the extensive frontier of Virginia, should the defensive system be continued. In support of this demand, he stated, in detail, the forts which must be garrisoned; and observed, that, with the exception of a few inhabitants in forts on the south branch of the Potowmac, the north mountain near Winchester had become the frontier; and that, without effectual aid, the inhabitants would even pass the Blue Ridge. He farther observed that the woods seemed "alive with French and Indians;" and again described so feelingly the situation of the inhabitants, that the assembly requested the governor to order half the militia of the adjoining counties to their relief; and the attorney general, Mr. Peyton Randolph, formed a company of one hundred gentlemen, who engaged to make the campaign, as volunteers. Ten well trained woodsmen, or Indians, would have rendered more service.

The distress of the country increased. As had been foreseen, Winchester became almost the only settlement west of the Blue Ridge, on the northern frontier; and fears were entertained that the enemy would soon pass even that barrier, and ravage the country below. Express after express was sent to hasten the militia, but sent in vain. At length, about the last of April, the French and their savage allies, laden with plunder, prisoners, and scalps, returned to fort Du Quesne.

Some short time after their retreat, the militia appeared. This temporary increase of strength was employed in searching the country for small parties of Indians, who lingered behind the main body, and in making dispositions to repel another invasion. A fort was commenced at Winchester, which, in honour of the general who had been appointed to the command of the British troops in America, was called fort Loudoun, and the perpetual remonstrances of Colonel Washington at length effected some improvement in the laws for the government of the troops.

Instead of adopting, in the first instance, that military code which experience had matured, the assembly passed occasional acts to remedy particular evils as they occurred; in consequence of which, a state of insubordination was protracted, and the difficulties of the commanding officer increased. Slight penalties were at first annexed to serious military offences; and when an act was obtained to punish mutiny and desertion with death, such crimes as cowardice in action, and sleeping on a post, were pretermitted. It was left impossible to hold a general court martial, without an order from the governor; and the commanding officer was not at liberty to make those arrangements in other respects which his own observation suggested, but shackled by the control of others, who could neither judge so correctly, nor be so well informed as himself.

These errors of a government unused to war, though continually remarked by the officer commanding the troops, were slowly perceived by those in power, and were never entirely corrected.

Successive incursions continued to be made into the country by small predatory parties of French and Indians, who kept up a perpetual alarm, and murdered the defenceless, wherever found. In Pennsylvania, the inhabitants were driven as far as Carlisle; and in Maryland, Fredericktown, on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge, became a frontier. With the Virginia regiment, which did not yet amount to one thousand men, aided occasionally by militia, Colonel Washington was to defend a frontier of near four hundred miles in extent, and to complete a chain of forts. He repeatedly urged the necessity and propriety of abandoning fort Cumberland, which was too far in advance of the settlements, and too far north, to be useful, while it required for its defence a larger portion of his force than could be spared with a proper regard to the safety of other and more advantageous positions. The governor, however, thought the abandonment of it improper, since it was a "*king's fort*;" and Lord Loudoun, on being consulted, gave the same opinion.

Among the subjects of extreme chagrin to the commander of the Virginia troops, was the practice of desertion. The prevalence of this crime was ascribed, in a considerable degree, to the ill-judged parsimony of the assembly. The daily pay of a soldier was only eight pence, out of which two pence were stopped for his clothes. This pay was inferior to what was received in every other part of the continent; and, as ought to have been foreseen, great discontents were excited by a distinction so invidious. The remonstrances of the commanding officer, in some degree, corrected this mischief; and a full suit of regimentals was allowed to each soldier, without deducting its price from his pay.

This campaign furnishes no event which can interest the reader, yet the duties of the officer, though minute, were arduous; and the sufferings of the people, beyond measure afflicting. It adds one to the many proofs which have been afforded, of the miseries to be expected by those who defer preparing the means of defence, until the moment when they ought to be used; and then, rely almost entirely, on a force neither adequate to the danger, nor of equal continuance.

It is an interesting fact to those who know the present situation of Virginia, that, so late as the year 1756, the Blue Ridge was the north-western frontier; and that she found immense difficulty in completing a single regiment to protect the inhabitants from the horrors of the scalping knife, and the still greater horrors of being led into captivity by savages who added terrors to death by the manner of inflicting it.

As soon as the main body of the enemy had withdrawn from the settlements, a tour was made by Colonel Washington to the south-western frontier. There, as well as to the north, continued incursions had been made; and there too, the principal defence of the country was entrusted to an ill-regulated militia. The fatal consequences of this system are thus stated by him, in a letter to the Lieutenant Governor: "The inhabitants are so sensible of their danger, if left to the protection of these people, that not a man will stay at his place. This I have from their own mouths, and the principal inhabitants of Augusta county. The militia are under such bad order and discipline, that they will come and go, when and where they please, without regarding time, their officers, or the safety of the inhabitants, but consulting solely their own inclinations. There should be, according to your honour's orders, one-third of the militia of these parts on duty at a time; instead of that, scarce one-thirtieth is out. They are to be relieved every month, and they are a great part of that time marching to and from their stations; and they will not wait one day longer than the limited time, whether relieved or not, however urgent the necessity for their continuance may be." Some instances of this, and of gross misbehaviour, were then enumerated; after which, he pressed the necessity of increasing the number of regulars to two thousand men.

After returning from this tour, to Winchester, he gave the Lieutenant Governor, in curious detail, a statement of the situation in which he found the country, urging, but urging in vain, arguments which will always be suggested by experience, against relying chiefly on militia for defence.

Sensible of the impracticability of defending such an extensive frontier, Colonel Washington continued to press the policy of enabling him to act on the offensive. The people of Virginia, he thought, could be protected only by entering the country of the enemy; giving him employment at home, and removing the source of all their calamities by taking possession of fort Du Quesne.

"As defensive measures," he observed in a letter to the Lieutenant Governor, "are evidently insufficient for the security and safety of the country, I hope no arguments are necessary to evince the necessity of altering them to a vigorous offensive war, in order to remove the cause." But in the event, that the assembly should still indulge their favourite scheme of protecting the inhabitants by forts along the frontiers, he presented a plan, which, in its execution, would require two thousand men —these were to be distributed in twenty-two forts, extending from the river Mayo to the Potowmac, in a line of three hundred and sixty miles. In a letter written about the same time to the speaker of the assembly, he said, "The certainty of advantage, by an offensive scheme of action, renders it, beyond any doubt, preferable to our defensive measures. Our scattered force, so separated and dispersed in weak parties, avails little to stop the secret incursions of the savages. We can only perhaps put them to flight, or frighten them to some other part of the country, which answers not the end proposed. Whereas, had we strength enough to invade their lands, we should restrain them from coming abroad, and leaving their families. We should then remove the principal cause, and have stronger probability of success; we should be free from the many alarms, mischiefs, and murders, that now attend us; we should inspirit the hearts of our few Indian friends, and gain more esteem with them. In short, could Pennsylvania and Maryland be induced to join us in an expedition of this nature, and to petition his Excellency Lord Loudoun for a small train of artillery, with some engineers, we should then be able, in all human probability, to subdue the terror of fort Du Quesne; retrieve our character with the Indians; and restore peace to our unhappy frontiers."

His total inability to act offensively, or even to afford protection to the frontiers of Virginia, was not the only distressing and vexatious circumstance to which he was exposed. The Lieutenant Governor, to whose commands he was subjected in every minute particular, and who seems to have been unequal to the difficulties of his station, frequently deranged his system by orders which could not be executed without considerable hazard and inconvenience. Colonel Washington could not always restrain his chagrin on such occasions; and, on one of them, observed in a letter to an intimate friend, who possessed great influence in the country, "whence it arises, or why, I am truly ignorant, but my strongest representations of matters relative to the peace of the frontiers are disregarded, as idle and frivolous; my propositions and measures, as partial and selfish; and all my sincerest endeavours for the service of my country, perverted to the worst purposes. My orders are dark, doubtful, and uncertain: to-day approved, to-morrow condemned; left to act and proceed at hazard; accountable for the consequences, and blamed without the benefit of defence. If you can think my situation capable of exciting the smallest degree of envy, or of affording the least satisfaction, the truth is yet hid from you, and you entertain notions very different from the reality of the case. However, I am determined to bear up under all these embarrassments some time longer, in the hope of better regulations under Lord Loudoun, to whom I look for the future fate of Virginia."

Not long after this letter was written, Lord Loudoun, in whose person the offices of Governor and Commander-in-chief were united, arrived in Virginia. A comprehensive statement of the situation of the colony, in a military point of view, and of the regiment in particular, was drawn up and submitted to him by Colonel Washington. In this he enumerated the errors which had prevented the completion of his regiment, showed the insufficiency of the militia for any military purpose, and demonstrated the superiority of an offensive system over that which had been pursued.

This statement was probably presented by Colonel Washington in person, who was permitted, during the winter, to visit Lord Loudoun in Philadelphia, where that nobleman met the Governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina, and the Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, in order to consult with them on the measures to be taken, in their respective Provinces, for the ensuing campaign. He was, however, disappointed in his favourite hope of being able to act offensively against the French on the Ohio. Lord Loudoun had determined to direct all his efforts against Canada, and to leave only twelve hundred men in the middle and southern colonies. Instead of receiving assistance, Virginia was required to send four hundred men to South Carolina. Not discouraged by these disappointments, Colonel Washington continued indefatigable in his endeavours to impress on Mr. Dinwiddie, and on the assembly, the importance of reviving, and properly modifying their military code, which had now expired, of making a more effective militia law, and of increasing their number of regular troops.

So far from succeeding on the last subject, he had the mortification to witness a measure which crushed his hopes of an adequate regular force. Being unable to complete the regiment by voluntary enlistment, the assembly changed its organization, and reduced it to ten companies; each to consist of one hundred men. May. Yet his anxious wishes continued to be directed towards fort Du Quesne. In a letter written about this time to Colonel Stanwix, who commanded in the middle colonies, he said, "You will excuse me, sir, for saying, that I think there never was, and perhaps never again will be, so favourable an opportunity as the present for reducing fort Du Quesne. Several prisoners have made their escape from the Ohio this spring, and agree in their accounts, that there are but three hundred men left in the garrison; and I do not conceive that the French are so strong in Canada, as to reinforce this place, and defend themselves at home this campaign: surely then this is too precious an opportunity to be lost."

But Mr. Pitt did not yet direct the councils of Britain; and a spirit of enterprise and heroism did not yet animate her generals. The campaign to the north was inglorious; and to the west, nothing was even attempted, which might relieve the middle colonies.

Large bodies of savages, in the service of France, once more spread desolation and murder over the whole country, west of the Blue Ridge. The regular troops were inadequate to the protection of the inhabitants; and the incompetency of the defensive system to their security became every day more apparent. "I exert every means," said Colonel Washington, in a letter to Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie, "to protect a much distressed country; but it is a task too arduous. To think of defending a frontier of more than three hundred and fifty miles extent, as ours is, with only seven hundred men, is vain and idle; especially when that frontier lies more contiguous to the enemy than any other.

Oct. 8.

"I am, and for a long time have been, fully convinced, that if we continue to pursue a defensive plan, the country must be inevitably lost."

In another letter he said, "The raising a company of rangers, or augmenting our strength in some other manner, is so far necessary, that, without it, the remaining inhabitants of this once fertile and populous valley will scarcely be detained at their dwellings until the spring. And if there is no expedition to the westward then, nor a force more considerable than Virginia can support, posted on our frontiers; if we still adhere, for the next campaign, to our destructive defensive schemes, there will not, I dare affirm, be one soul living on this side the Blue Ridge the ensuing autumn, if we except the troops in garrison and a few inhabitants of this town, who may shelter themselves under the protection of this fort. This I know to be the immoveable determination of all the settlers of this country."

Oct. 24.

To the Speaker of the assembly he gave the same opinion; and added, "I do not know on whom these miserable undone people are to rely for protection. If the assembly are to give it to them, it is time that measures were at least concerting, and not when they ought to be going into execution, as has always been the case. If they are to seek it from the Commander-in-chief, it is time their condition was made known to him. For I can not forbear repeating again, that, while we pursue defensive measures, we pursue inevitable ruin."

It was impossible for Colonel Washington, zealous in the service of his country, and ambitious of military fame, to observe the errors committed in the conduct of the war, without censuring them. These errors were not confined to the military affairs of the colony. The Cherokee and Catawba Indians, had hitherto remained faithful to the English, and it was 1757. very desirable to engage the warriors of those tribes heartily in their service; but so miserably was the intercourse with them conducted, that, though a considerable expense was incurred, not much assistance was obtained, and great disgust was excited among them. The freedom with which the Commander-in-chief of the Virginia forces censured public measures, gave offence to the Lieutenant Governor, who considered these censures as manifesting a want of respect for himself. Sometimes he coarsely termed them *impertinent*; and at other times, charged him with looseness in his information, and inattention to his duty. Aug. 27. On one of these occasions, Colonel Washington thus concluded a letter of detail, "Nothing remarkable has happened, and therefore I have nothing to add. I must beg leave, however, before I conclude, to observe, in justification of my own conduct, that it is with pleasure I receive reproof when reproof is due, because no person can be readier to accuse me, than I am to acknowledge an error, when I have committed it; nor more desirous of atoning for a crime, when I am sensible of being guilty of one. But, on the other hand, it is with concern I remark, that my best endeavours lose their reward; and that my conduct, although I have uniformly studied to make it as unexceptionable as I could, does not appear to you in a favourable point of light. Otherwise, your honour would not have accused me of *loose* behaviour, and *remissness* of duty, in matters where, I think, I have rather exceeded than fallen short of it. This, I think, is evidently the case in speaking of Indian affairs at all, after being instructed in October. very express terms, '*Not to have any concern with, or management of Indian affairs.*' This has induced me to forbear mentioning the Indians in my letters to your honour of late, and to leave the misunderstanding, which you speak of, between Mr. Aikin and them, to be related by him."

Not long after this, he received a letter informing him of some coarse calumny, reflecting on his veracity and honour, which had been reported to the Lieutenant Governor. He enclosed a copy of this letter to Mr. Dinwiddie, and thus addressed him,—"I should take it infinitely kind if your honour would please to inform me whether a report of this nature was ever made to you; and, in that case, who was the author of it."

"It is evident from a variety of circumstances, and especially from the change in your honour's conduct towards me, that some person, as well inclined to detract, but better skilled in the art of detraction than the author of the above stupid scandal, has made free with my character. For I cannot suppose, that malice so absurd, so barefaced, so diametrically opposite to truth, to common policy, and, in short, to every thing but villany, as the above is, could impress you with so ill an opinion of my honour and honesty."

"If it be possible that****, for my belief is staggered, not being conscious of having given the least cause to any one, much less to that gentleman, to reflect so grossly; I say, if it be possible that**** could descend so low as to be the propagator of this story, he must either be vastly ignorant of the state of affairs in this country *at that time*, or else, he must suppose that the whole body of the inhabitants had combined with me in executing the deceitful fraud. Or why did they, almost to a man, forsake their dwellings in the greatest terror and confusion; and while one half of them sought shelter in paltry forts, (of their own building,) the other should flee to the adjacent counties for refuge; numbers of them even to Carolina, from whence they have never returned?

"These are facts well known; but not better known than that these wretched people, while they lay pent up in forts, destitute of the common supports of life, (having in their precipitate flight forgotten, or rather, been unable to secure any kind of necessaries,) did despatch messengers of their own, (thinking I had not represented their miseries in the piteous manner they deserved,) with addresses to your honour and the assembly, praying relief. And did I ever send any alarming account, without sending also the original papers (or the copies) which gave rise to it?

"That I have foibles, and perhaps many of them, I shall not deny. I should esteem myself, as the world also would, vain and empty, were I to arrogate perfection.

"Knowledge in military matters is to be acquired only by practice and experience; and if I have erred, great allowance should be made for want of them; unless my errors should appear to be wilful; and then, I conceive, it would be more generous to charge me with my faults, and to let me stand or fall according to evidence, than to stigmatize me behind my back.

"It is uncertain in what light my services may have appeared to your honour: but this I know, and it is the highest consolation I am capable of feeling, that no man that ever was employed in a public capacity, has endeavoured to discharge the trust reposed in him with greater honesty, and more zeal for the country's interest than I have done; and if there is any person living, who can say with justice that I have offered any intentional wrong to the public, I will cheerfully submit to the most ignominious punishment that an injured people ought to inflict. On the other hand, it is hard to have my character arraigned, and my actions condemned, without a hearing.

"I must therefore again beg in *more plain*, and in very *earnest* terms, to know if * * * * has taken the liberty of representing my conduct to your honour with such ungentlemanly freedom as the letter implies. Your condescension herein will be acknowledged a singular favour."

In a letter, some short time after this, to the Lieutenant Governor, he said, "I do not know that I ever gave your honour cause to suspect me of ingratitude; a crime I detest, and would most carefully avoid. If an open, disinterested behaviour carries offence, I may have offended; for I have all along laid it down as a maxim, to represent facts freely and impartially, but not more so to others than to you, sir. If instances of my ungrateful behaviour had been particularized, I would have answered them. But I have been long convinced that my actions and their motives have been maliciously aggravated." A request that he might be permitted to come to Williamsburg for the settlement of some accounts, which he was desirous of adjusting under the inspection of the Lieutenant Governor, who proposed to leave the province in the following November, was refused in abrupt and disobliging terms. In answer to the letter containing the refusal, Colonel Washington, after stating the immoveable disposition of the inhabitants to leave the country unless more sufficiently protected, added, "To give a more succinct account of their affairs than I could in writing, was the principal, among many other reasons, that induced me to ask leave to come down. It was not to enjoy a party of pleasure that I asked leave of absence. I have indulged with few of those, winter or summer."

Mr. Dinwiddie soon afterwards took leave of Virginia, and the government devolved on Mr. Blair, the President of the Council. Between him and the commander of the colonial troops the utmost cordiality existed.

After the close of this campaign, Lord Loudoun returned to England, and General Abercrombie succeeded to the command of the army. The department of the middle and southern provinces was committed to General Forbes, who, to the inexpressible gratification of Colonel Washington, determined to undertake an expedition against fort Due Quesne.

He urged an early campaign, but he urged it ineffectually; and, before the troops were assembled, a large body of French and Indians broke into the country, and renewed the horrors of the tomahawk and scalping-knife. The county of Augusta was ravaged, and about sixty persons were murdered. The attempts made to intercept these savages were unsuccessful; and they re-crossed the Alleghany, with their plunder, prisoners, and scalps. 1758.

At length, orders were given to assemble the regiment at Winchester, and be in readiness to march in fifteen days. On receiving them, Colonel Washington called in his recruiting parties; but so inattentive had the government been to his representations that, previous to marching his regiment, he was under the necessity of repairing to Williamsburg, personally to enforce his solicitations for arms, ammunition, money, and clothing. That these preparations for an expedition vitally interesting to Virginia, should remain to be made after the season for action had commenced, does not furnish stronger evidence of the difficulties encountered by the chief of the mili- May 24.

tary department, than is given by another circumstance of about the same date. He was under the necessity of pointing out and urging the propriety of allowing to his regiment, which had performed much severe service, the same pay which had been granted to a second regiment, voted the preceding session of Assembly, to serve for a single year.

Among other motives for an early campaign, Colonel Washington had urged the impracticability of detaining the Indians. His fears were well founded. Before a junction of the troops had been made, these savages became impatient to return to their homes; and, finding that the expedition would yet be delayed a considerable time, they left the army, with promises to rejoin it at the proper season.

In pursuance of the orders which had been received, the Virginia troops moved in detachments from Winchester to fort Cumberland, where they assembled early in July: after which, they were employed in opening a road to Raystown, where Colonel Bouquet was stationed. As the English were continually harassed by small parties of French and Indians, the general had contemplated advancing a strong detachment over the Alleghany mountains, for the purpose of giving them employment at home. By the advice of Colonel Washington this plan was relinquished. In support of his opinion, he stated the probability that a large force was collected at fort Du Quesne, and the impracticability of moving a strong detachment, without such a quantity of provisions, as would expose it to the danger of being discovered and cut to pieces. He advised to harass them with small parties, principally of Indians; and this advice was pursued.

June 24.

Colonel Washington had expected that the army would march by Braddock's road: but, late in July, he had the mortification to receive a letter from Colonel Bouquet, asking an interview with him, in order to consult on opening a new road from Raystown, and requesting his opinion on that route. "I shall," says he, in answer to this letter, "most cheerfully work on any road, pursue any route, or enter upon any service, that the general or yourself may think me usefully employed in, or qualified for; and shall never have a will of my own, when a duty is required of me. But since you desire me

July.

to speak my sentiments freely, permit me to observe, that, after having conversed with all the guides, and having been informed by others acquainted with the country, I am convinced that a road, to be compared with General Braddock's, or indeed that will be fit for transportation even by pack-horses, can not be made. I own I have no predilection for the route you have in contemplation for me."

A few days after writing this letter, he had an interview with Colonel Bouquet, whom he found decided in favour of opening the new road. After their separation, Colonel Washington, with his permission, addressed to him a letter to be laid before General Forbes, then indisposed at Carlisle, in which he stated his reasons against this measure. He concluded his arguments against the new road: arguments which appear to be unanswerable, by declaring his fears that, should the attempt be made, they would be able to do nothing more than fortify some post on the other side of the Alleghany, and prepare for another campaign. This he prayed Heaven to avert.

He was equally opposed to a scheme which had been suggested of marching by the two different routes, and recommended an order of march by Braddock's road, which would bring the whole army before fort Du Quesne in thirty-four days, with a supply of provisions for eighty-six days.

In a letter of the same date addressed to Major Halket, aid of General Forbes, Colonel Washington thus expressed his forebodings of the mischiefs to be apprehended from the adoption of the proposed route. "I am just returned from a conference held with Colonel Bouquet. I find him fixed—I think I may say unalterably fixed—to lead you a new way to the Ohio, through a road, every inch of which is to be cut at this advanced season, when we have scarcely time left to tread the beaten track, universally confessed to be the best passage through the mountains.

"If Colonel Bouquet succeeds in this point with the general, all is lost! all is lost indeed! our enterprise is ruined! and we shall be stopped at the Laurel hill this winter; but not to gather laurels, except of the kind which cover the mountains. The southern Indians will turn against us, and these colonies will be desolated by such an accession to the enemy's strength. These must be the consequences of a miscarriage; and a miscarriage, the almost necessary consequence of an attempt to march the army by this route."

Colonel Washington's remonstrances and arguments were unavailing; and the new route was adopted. His extreme chagrin at this measure, and at the delays resulting from it, was expressed in anxious letters to Mr. Fauquier, then governor of Virginia, and to the speaker of the house of burgesses.

In a letter to the speaker, written while at fort Cumberland, September. he said: "We are still encamped here; very sickly, and dispirited at the prospect before us. That appearance of glory which we once had in view—that hope—that laudable ambition of serving our country, and meriting its applause, are now no more: all is dwindled into ease, sloth, and fatal inactivity. In a word, all is lost, if the ways of men in power, like certain ways of Providence, are not inscrutable. But we who view the actions of great men at a distance can only form conjectures agreeably to a limited perception; and, being ignorant of the comprehensive schemes which may be in contemplation, might mistake egregiously in judging of things from appearances, or by the lump. Yet every f**l will have his notions—will prattle and talk away; and why may not I? We seem then, in my opinion, to act under the guidance of an evil genius. The conduct of our leaders, if not actuated by superior orders, is tempered with something—I do not care to give a name to. Nothing now but a miracle can bring this campaign to a happy issue." He then recapitulated the arguments he had urged against attempting a new road, and added, "but I spoke unavailingly. The road was immediately begun; and since then, from one to two thousand men have constantly wrought on it. By the last accounts I have received, they had cut it to the foot of the Laurel hill, about thirty-five miles; and I suppose, by this time, fifteen hundred men have taken post about ten miles further, at a place called Loyal Hanna, where our next fort is to be constructed.

"We have certain intelligence that the French strength at fort Du Quesne did not exceed eight hundred men, the thirteenth ultimo; including about three or four hundred Indians. See how our time has been misspent—behold how the golden opportunity is lost—perhaps, never to be regained! How is it to be accounted for? Can General Forbes have orders for this?—Impossible. Will then our injured country pass by such abuses? I hope not. Rather let a full representation of the matter go to his majesty; let him know how grossly his glory and interests, and the public money have been prostituted."

Colonel Washington was soon afterwards ordered to Raystown. Major Grant had been previously detached from the advanced post at Loyal Hanna, with a select corps of eight hundred men, to reconnoitre the country about Sept. 21. fort Du Quesne. In the night he reached a hill near the fort, and sent forward a party for the purpose of discovery. They burnt a log house, and returned. Next morning, Major Grant detached Major Lewis, of Colonel Washington's regiment, with a baggage guard, two miles into his rear; and sent an engineer, with a covering party, within full view of the fort, to take a plan of the works. In the mean time he ordered the *reveillée* to be beaten in different places. An action soon commenced, on which Major Lewis, leaving Captain Bullett, with about fifty Virginians to guard the baggage, advanced with the utmost celerity to support Major Grant. The English were defeated with considerable loss; and both Major Grant and Major Lewis were taken prisoners. In this action, the Virginians evidenced the spirit with which they had been trained. Out of eight officers, five were killed, a sixth wounded, and a seventh taken prisoner. Captain Bullett, who defended the baggage with great resolution, and contributed to save the remnant of the detachment, was the only officer who escaped unhurt. Of one hundred and sixty-two men, sixty-two were killed on the spot, and two wounded. This conduct reflected high honour on the commanding officer of the regiment as well as on the troops; and he received, on the occasion, the compliments of the general. The total loss was two hundred and seventy-three killed, and forty-two wounded.

It was at length determined that the main body of the army should move from Raystown; and the general called on the colonels of regiments, to submit severally to his Oct. 8. consideration, a plan for his march. That proposed by Colonel Washington has been preserved, and appears to have been judiciously formed.

They reached the camp at Loyal Hanna, through a road indescribably bad, about the fifth of November; where, Nov. as had been predicted, a council of war determined that it was unadviseable to proceed farther this campaign. It would have been almost impossible to winter an army in that position. They must have retreated from the cold inhospitable wilderness into which they had penetrated, or have suffered immensely; perhaps have perished. Fortunately, some prisoners were taken, who informed them of the extreme distress of the fort. Deriving no support from Canada, the garrison was weak; in great want of provisions; and had been deserted by the Indians. These encouraging circumstances changed the resolution which had been taken, and determined the general to prosecute the expedition.

Colonel Washington was advanced in front; and, with immense labour, opened a way for the main body of the army. The troops moved forward with slow and painful steps until they reached fort Du Quesne, of which they took Nov. 25. peaceable possession; the garrison having on the preceding night, after evacuating and setting it on fire, proceeded down the Ohio in boats.

To other causes than the vigour of the officer who conducted this enterprise, the capture of this important place is to be ascribed. The naval armaments of Britain had intercepted the reinforcements designed by France for her colonies; and the pressure on Canada was such as to disable the governor of that province from detaching troops to fort Du Quesne. Without the aid of these causes, the extraordinary and unaccountable delays of the campaign must have defeated its object.

The works were repaired, and the new fort received the name of the great minister, who, with unparalleled vigour and talents, then governed the nation.

After furnishing two hundred men from his regiment as a garrison for fort Pitt, Colonel Washington marched back to Winchester; whence he soon afterwards proceeded to Williamsburg, to take his seat in the General Assembly, of which he had been elected a member by the county of Frederick, while at fort Cumberland.

A cessation of Indian hostility being the consequence of expelling the French from the Ohio, Virginia was relieved from the dangers with which she had been threatened; and the object for which alone he had continued in the service, after perceiving that he should not be placed on the permanent establishment, was accomplished. His health was much impaired, and his domestic affairs required his attention.

Impelled by these and other motives of a private nature, he determined to withdraw from a service, which he might now quit without dishonour, and, about the close of the year, resigned his commission, as colonel of the first Virginia regiment, and commander-in-chief of all the troops raised in the colony.

The officers whom he had commanded were greatly attached to him. They manifested their esteem and their regret at parting, by a very affectionate address,[1] expressive of the high opinion they entertained both of his military and private character.

This opinion was not confined to the officers of his regiment. It was common to Virginia; and had been adopted by the British officers with whom he served. The duties he performed, though not splendid, were arduous; and were executed with zeal, and with judgment. The exact discipline he established in his regiment, when the temper of Virginia was extremely hostile to discipline, does credit to his military character, and the gallantry the troops displayed, whenever called into action, manifests the spirit infused into them by their commander.

The difficulties of his situation, while unable to cover the frontier from the French and Indians, who were spreading death and desolation in every quarter, were incalculably great; and no better evidence of his exertions, under these distressing circumstances, can be given, than the undiminished confidence still placed in him, by those whom he was unable to protect.

The efforts to which he incessantly stimulated his country for the purpose of obtaining possession of the Ohio; the system for the conduct of the war which he continually recommended; the vigorous and active measures always urged upon those by whom he was commanded manifest an ardent and enterprising mind, tempered by judgment, and quickly improved by experience.

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[1] See note, No. III, at the end of the volume.

Not long after his resignation, he was married to Mrs. Custis; a young lady to whom he had been for some time attached; and who, to a large fortune and fine person, added those amiable accomplishments which ensure domestic happiness, and fill, with silent but unceasing felicity, the quiet scenes of private life.

CHAPTER II

The attention of Colonel Washington, for several years after his marriage, was principally directed to the management of his estate. He continued a most respectable member of the legislature of his country, in which he took an early and a decided part against the claims of supremacy asserted by the British Parliament. As hostilities approached, he was chosen by the independent companies, formed through the northern parts of Virginia, to command them; and was elected a member of the first congress which met in Philadelphia. The illustrious patriots who composed it, soon distinguished him as the soldier of America, and placed him on all those committees whose duty it was to make arrangements for defence. When it became necessary to appoint a commander-in-chief, his military character, the solidity of his judgment, the steady firmness of his temper, the dignity of his person and deportment, the confidence inspired by his patriotism and integrity, and the independence of his fortune, combined to designate him, in the opinion of all, for that important station. Local jealousy was suppressed, not only by the enthusiasm of the moment, but by that policy which induced the sagacious delegation from New England, to prefer a commander-in-chief from the south.

On the 14th of June, he was unanimously chosen "General, and Commander-in-chief of the armies of the United Colonies, and all the forces now raised, or to be raised by them."[1] 1775.

On the succeeding day, when the President communicated this appointment to him, he expressed his high sense of the honour conferred upon him, and his firm determination to exert every power he possessed in the service of his country and of her "glorious cause." At the same time he acknowledged the distress he felt from a consciousness that his abilities and military experience might not be equal to the extensive and important trust.

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[1] See note, No. IV, at the end of the volume.

He declined all compensation for his services; and avowed an intention to keep an exact account of his expenses, which he should rely on Congress to discharge.

A special commission was directed, and a resolution unanimously passed, declaring that "Congress would maintain, assist, and adhere to him, as the General and Commander-in-chief of the forces raised, or to be raised, for the maintenance and preservation of American liberty with their lives and fortunes."

He prepared, without delay, to enter upon the arduous duties of his office; and, remaining only a few days in New York, where several important arrangements were to be made, proceeded to the head quarters of the American army.

As all orders of men concurred in approving his appointment, all concurred in expressing their satisfaction at that event, and their determination to afford him entire support. A committee of the Congress of Massachusetts waited to receive him at Springfield, on the confines of the colony, and to escort him to the army. On his arrival, an address was presented to him by the House of Representatives, breathing the most cordial affection, and testifying the most exalted respect. His answer[1] was well calculated to keep up impressions essential to the success of that arduous contest into which the United Colonies had entered.

July 3.

The first moments after his arrival in camp were employed in reconnoitring the enemy, and examining the strength and situation of the American troops.

The main body of the British army, under the immediate command of General Howe, was entrenching itself strongly on Bunker's hill. Three floating batteries lay in Mystic river, near the camp, and a twenty gun ship below the ferry, between Boston and Charlestown. A strong battery on the Boston side of the water, on Cop's or Cope's hill, served to cover and strengthen the post on Bunker's hill. Another division was deeply entrenched on Roxbury neck. The light horse, and an inconsiderable body of infantry, were stationed in Boston.

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[1] It is in the following terms:

"Gentlemen,—Your kind congratulations on my appointment and arrival, demand my warmest acknowledgments, and will be ever retained in grateful remembrance. In exchanging the enjoyments of domestic life for the duties of my present honourable but arduous situation, I only emulate the virtue and public spirit of the whole Province of Massachusetts, which, with a firmness and patriotism without example, has sacrificed all the comforts of social and political life, in support of the rights of mankind, and the welfare of our common country. My highest ambition is to be the happy instrument of vindicating these rights, and to see this devoted Province again restored to peace, liberty, and safety. "GEO: WASHINGTON."

The American army lay on both sides of Charles river. The right occupied the high grounds about Roxbury; whence it extended towards Dorchester; and the left was covered by Mystic or Medford river, a space of at least twelve miles. These extensive lines could not be contracted without opening to the British general a communication with the country.

For the purpose of a more distinct arrangement, the army was thrown into three grand divisions. That part of it which lay about Roxbury, constituted the right wing, and was commanded by Major General Ward; the troops near Mystic or Medford river formed the left, which was placed under Major General Lee. The centre, including the reserve, was under the immediate command of General Washington, whose head quarters were at Cambridge.

The army consisted of fourteen thousand five hundred men; but several circumstances combined to render this force less effective than its numbers would indicate.

So long had the hope of avoiding open hostilities been indulged, that the time for making preparations to meet them had passed away unemployed, and the neglect could not be remedied. On General Washington's arrival in camp, he had ordered a return of the ammunition to be made; and the report stated three hundred and three barrels of powder to be in store. A few days after this return, the alarming discovery was made, that the actual quantity was not more than sufficient to furnish each man with nine cartridges. This mistake had been produced by a misapprehension of the committee of supplies, (for the magazines were not yet in possession of military officers,) who, instead of returning the existing quantity, reported the whole which had been originally furnished by the Province. Though the utmost exertions were made, this critical state of things continued about a fortnight, when a small supply of powder was received from Elizabethtown, in New Jersey.[1] The utmost address was used to conceal from the enemy this alarming deficiency but when it is recollected, in how many various directions, and to what various bodies, application for assistance was unavoidably made, it will appear scarcely possible that those efforts at concealment could have been completely successful. It is more probable that the communications which must have been made to the British general were discredited; and that he could not permit himself to believe, that an army without bayonets, would be hardy enough to maintain the position occupied by the Provincials, if destitute of ammunition.

The troops were also in such need of tents, as to be placed in barracks, instead of being encamped in the open field; and were almost destitute of clothing. They had, too, been raised by the colonial governments; each of which organized its quota on different principles. From this cause resulted not only a want of uniformity, but other defects which were much more important. In Massachusetts, the soldiers had chosen their platoon officers, and generally lived with them as equals. This unmilitary practice was the certain index of that general insubordination which pervaded every department. The difficulty of establishing principles of order and obedience, always considerable among raw troops, was increased by the short terms for which enlistments had been made. The quotas of some of the colonies would be entitled to a discharge in November; and none were engaged to continue in service longer than the last of December. The early orders evidence a state of things still more loose and unmilitary than was to be inferred from the circumstances under which the war had been commenced.

An additional inconvenience, derived from this mixed agency of local governments with that of the Union, was thus stated by General Washington in a letter addressed to congress:—"I should be extremely deficient in gratitude as well as justice, if I did not take the first opportunity to acknowledge the readiness and attention which the congress and different committees have shown to make every thing as convenient and agreeable as possible; but there is a vital and inherent principle of delay, incompatible with military service, in transacting business through such various and different channels.[1] I esteem it my duty, therefore, to represent the inconvenience that must unavoidably ensue from a dependence on a number of persons for supplies; and submit it to the consideration of congress, whether the public service will not be best promoted by appointing a Commissary General for the purpose."[2]

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[1] A circumstance attending this transaction, will furnish some idea of the difficulties encountered by those who then conducted the affairs of America. All-important to the general safety as was the speedy replenishment of the magazines of that army which lay encamped in front of the enemy, the committee of Elizabethtown was under the necessity of transmitting this powder secretly, lest the people of the neighbourhood should seize and detain it for their own security.

Every military operation was also seriously affected by the total want of engineers, and the deficiency of working tools.

To increase difficulties already so considerable, the appointment of general officers, made by congress, gave extensive dissatisfaction, and determined several of those who thought themselves injured, to retire from the service.

These disadvantages deducted essentially from the capacity of the American force: but under them all, the General observed with pleasure "the materials for a good army." These were "a great number of men, able bodied, active, zealous in the cause, and of unquestionable courage." Possessed of these materials, he employed himself indefatigably in their organization. The army was arranged into divisions and brigades; and congress was urged to the appointment of a Paymaster, Quartermaster General, and such other general staff as are indispensable in the structure of a regular military establishment.

The two armies continued to work on their respective fortifications, without seriously molesting each other. Slight skirmishes occasionally took place, in which little execution was done; and, although the Americans made some advances, no attempt was made to dislodge them.

The Commander-in-chief submitted with reluctance to this state of apparent inactivity. He felt the importance of destroying the army in Boston, before it should be strengthened by reinforcements in the ensuing spring; and with a view to this object, frequently reconnoitred its situation, and was assiduous in collecting every information respecting its strength. September. The result of his observations and inquiries seems to have been, a strong inclination to the opinion, that to carry the works by storm, though hazardous, was not impracticable. A council of general officers being unanimously of opinion, that for the present at least, the attempt ought not to be made, it was laid aside.

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[1] The General was under the necessity of carrying on a direct correspondence, not only with the several colonial governments, but with the committees of all the important towns and some inferior places.

[2] It is strange that an army should have been formed without such an officer.

A rigorous blockade being maintained, the British army began to suffer considerably for fresh meat and vegetables. The small parties which sailed from Boston, in quest of these articles, were frequently disappointed by the vigilance of the minute men. But the continuance of active exertion, which this service required on the part of the inhabitants of the sea coast, soon became burdensome; and the governors of the several colonies pressed for detachments from the main army. Although it was impossible to spare the troops required, without hazarding the cause of the colonies, great irritation was excited by the refusal to comply with these demands of particular protection. They at length became so importunate, and the unavoidable refusal to comply with them was so ill received, that congress was induced to pass a resolution, declaring that the army before Boston was designed only to oppose the enemy at that place, and ought not to be weakened by detachments for the security of other parts of the country. At Newport, in Rhode Island, the committee sought to secure the place, by entering into a compromise with Captain Wallace, who commanded the ships of war on that station, stipulating that he should be furnished with provisions on condition of his sparing the town, and committing no depredations on the country. This compromise contravened so essentially the general plan of distressing the British forces, that General Washington deemed it necessary to interpose, and represent to the Governor of that province, the mischief to be apprehended from so dangerous a practice.

While the blockade of Boston was thus perseveringly maintained, other events of considerable importance took place elsewhere.

In July, Georgia joined her sister colonies, and chose delegates to represent her in congress: after which, the style of 'The thirteen United Colonies' was assumed; and by that title, the English Provinces, confederated and in arms, were thenceforward designated.

After a recess of one month, congress again assembled at Philadelphia. The state of the colonies, and the letters of the Commander-in-chief being immediately taken into consideration, the scarcity of arms and ammunition engaged their most serious attention. Great exertions[1] had been made, by importation and by domestic manufacture, to extricate the country from this perilous situation; but the supplies were unequal to the necessities of the army; and the danger resulting from the want of articles, so vitally essential in war, still continued to be great.

Sept. 5.

The importance of a maritime force to the military operations of a country possessing an immense extent of sea coast must always be sensibly felt; and, in an early stage of the contest, the particular attention of the United Colonies was directed more immediately to this interesting object, by an event not very unusual in war, but which, at this time, excited no ordinary degree of resentment.

Orders had been issued to the commanders of the British ships of war to proceed, as in the case of actual rebellion, against those seaport towns which were accessible, and in which any troops should be raised, or military works erected.

Falmouth, a flourishing village on the sea coast of Massachusetts, having given some particular offence, a small naval force, commanded by Captain Mowat, was, under colour of these orders, detached for its destruction. After making an ineffectual effort to induce the inhabitants to deliver up their arms and ammunition, and four of the principal citizens as hostages, he commenced a furious cannonade and bombardment, by which the town was reduced to ashes. An attempt was then made to penetrate into the country; but the militia and minute men, rather irritated than intimidated by this wanton act of unavailing devastation, drove the party, which had landed, back to their ships.

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[1] The agents of congress had the address to purchase all the powder on the coast of Africa, and that within the British forts, without attracting notice; and to seize the magazine in the island of Bermuda. Great exertions were also made in the interior to obtain saltpetre and sulphur, for the manufacture of that important article.

This measure was loudly reprobated throughout America, and contributed, not a little, to turn the attention of the United Colonies to their marine. It was one immediate motive with the convention of Massachusetts, for granting letters of marque and reprisal; and was assigned by congress, in addition to the capture of American merchantmen on the high seas, as an inducement for fitting out some ships of war; to man which they directed two battalions of marines to be recruited.

Though congress deferred granting general letters of reprisal, they adopted a measure of equal efficacy, but less hostile in appearance. Their ships of war were authorized to capture all vessels employed in giving assistance to the enemy; the terms used in their resolution were such as comprehended every possible capture. A few small cruisers had already been fitted out by the directions of General Washington; and the coasts soon swarmed with the privateers of New England. These naval exertions were attended with valuable consequences. Many captures were made; and important supplies of ammunition were thus obtained.

Although the British army had manifested no intention to evacuate Boston, fears were continually entertained for New York. Mr. Tryon, who was popular in that province, had been lately recalled from North Carolina, and appointed its governor. His utmost influence was employed in detaching that colony from the union; and his exertions were seconded by the Asia man of war, whose guns commanded the town. The consequence of these intrigues and of this terror was, that even in the convention, disaffection to the American cause began openly to show itself; and a determination to join the king's standard is said to have been expressed with impunity. These threatening appearances were rendered the more serious by some confidential communications from England, stating the intention of administration to send a fleet into the Hudson, and to occupy both New York and Albany. Under the alarm thus excited, an effort was made in Congress to obtain a resolution for seizing the governor. He had, however, been artful enough to make impressions in his favour; and he was defended by a part of the delegation from New York with so much earnestness that, for a time, the advocates of the proposition forbore to press it. Afterwards, when the increasing defection in that province induced Congress to resume the subject, the resolution was expressed in general terms; Oct. 6. and assumed the form of a recommendation, to those who exercised the legislative and executive functions in the several provinces, "to arrest and secure every person in the respective colonies, whose going at large might, in their opinion, endanger the safety of the colony, or the liberties of America." Intelligence of this resolution is supposed to have been received by the governor, who, after some correspondence with the mayor of the city respecting his personal safety, retired for security on board the Halifax packet, and continued to carry on his intrigues with nearly as much advantage as while on shore.

But the subject which, next to the supply of arms and ammunition, most interested the American government, was the re-enlistment of the army.

On the 29th of September, at the earnest solicitation of General Washington, a committee had been appointed by congress, with directions to repair to the camp at Cambridge; there to consult with the Commander-in-chief, and with the chief magistrates of New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, and the council of Massachusetts, "on the most effectual method of continuing, supporting, and regulating a continental army." On the return of this committee, congress determined that the new army should consist of twenty thousand three hundred and seventy-two men, including officers; to be raised as far as practicable from the troops already in service. Unfortunately, in constituting this first military establishment of the union, an essential error was committed; the consequences of which ceased only with the war. The soldiers, instead of being engaged for an unlimited time, were enlisted for the term of only one year, if not sooner discharged by congress. It is not easy to account entirely for this fatal error. With their jealousy of a permanent army, were probably intermingled hopes that the war would not be of long duration, and fears that much difficulty would be encountered in prevailing on men to enter into engagements of unlimited extent. Perhaps the habits of the northern colonies, where it had been usual to raise men for a single campaign, may have contributed to this measure. Whatever may have been its motives, its consequences were of the most serious nature; and it brought the American cause, more than once, into real hazard.

Other resolutions accompanied that for raising and establishing the new army, which exhibit the perilous condition of the country, and its want of those means, which were indispensable to the support of the arduous conflict in which it was engaged.

One resolution ordered the detention, at a valuation, of the arms of those soldiers who should refuse to re-enlist, although they were private property, and but ill adapted to military purposes; another, offered two dollars to every recruit who would supply himself with a blanket; a third, ordered the purchase of any cloths which could be procured, without regard to colour, to be delivered to the soldiers, after deducting the price from their pay; and a fourth, required the soldiers to furnish their own arms, or to pay for the use of those which might be supplied by the government.

Before the arrangements made by the committee were confirmed by congress, General Washington proceeded to take the preparatory steps for carrying them into execution.

It being understood that the engagements of the officers, as well as of the soldiers, would expire with the year; the whole army was to be formed anew. The officers therefore were required to signify in writing to their respective colonels, their determination to leave, or to continue in the service; that it might be communicated to congress through the officer commanding brigades.

The urgency of the case could not produce a compliance with these orders. Many disregarded them; and others annexed conditions to their remaining in the service. Repetitions of them became necessary; and an unconditional declaration was required.[1] But that high spirit and enthusiastic ardour, which had brought such numbers into the field after the battle of Lexington, was already beginning to dissipate; and that alacrity for the service, which had been expected, was not displayed. The orders of the day contain the most animating exhortations to the army, and the strongest appeals to its patriotism; but there was an ominous hesitation in forming new engagements.

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[1] In this state of things, several officers, supposing that commissions and rank might depend on recruiting men, began, without permission, to recruit soldiers, to serve particularly under the officer enlisting them. Every military principle required that this practice should be arrested; and it was peremptorily forbidden in general orders.

At length, with such labour, the officers were arranged, upon which, recruiting orders were issued. But the sufferings of the army for fuel, clothes, and even provisions, had been great; and to this cause may be attributed the tardiness with which the soldiers in camp enrolled themselves. One officer from each company was employed to recruit in the country; but their progress was not such as the crisis demanded; and the army was dissolving by the expiration of the time for which it had been enlisted. The impatience of the soldiers to revisit their friends, overcame all their solicitude for maintaining the blockade of Boston; and it was with great difficulty that those entitled to a discharge were detained in camp even for ten days; at the end of which time a body of militia was expected to supply their places. This fact, however, did not convince the governments of the United Colonies, that it was possible to rely too much on individual patriotism; and that the American cause, if defended entirely by temporary armies, must be often exposed to imminent hazard.

Perceiving the difficulty of recruiting the army, the General earnestly recommended to congress, to try the effect of a bounty. This proposition was not adopted until Nov. 30. late in January; and, on the last day of December, when all the old troops, not engaged on the new establishment, were disbanded, only nine thousand six hundred and fifty men had been enlisted for the army of 1776; many of whom were unavoidably permitted to be absent on furlough. Their numbers, however, were considerably augmented during the winter; and, in the mean time, the militia cheerfully complied with the requisitions made on them.

Notwithstanding these complicated difficulties and embarrassments, the General viewed with deep mortification the semblance of inactivity to which his situation compelled him to submit. In the commencement of the contest, while the minds of many were undetermined, it was of vast importance to secure the public confidence, and it was necessary to pay some attention even to the public caprice. The real difficulties under which he laboured, were not generally known. His numbers were exaggerated, and his means of carrying on offensive operations were magnified. The expulsion of the British army from Boston had been long since anticipated by many; and those were not wanting, who endeavoured to spread discontent by insinuating that the Commander-in-chief was desirous of prolonging the war, in order to continue his own importance. To these symptoms of impatience, and to the consequences they might produce, he could not be insensible; but it was not in his power to silence such complaints, by disclosing to the world his real situation. His views still continued to be directed towards Boston; and, congress having manifested a disposition favourable to an attack on that place, the general officers had been again assembled, and had again advised unanimously against the measure. Supposing that fears for the safety of the town might embarrass the proceedings of the army congress resolved, December. "that if General Washington and his council of war should be of opinion that a successful attack might be made on the troops in Boston, he should make it in any manner he might think expedient, notwithstanding the town and property in it might be thereby destroyed."

Whilst waiting for a favourable opportunity to execute this bold plan, the American General availed himself of the occasional aids received from the militia, to make advances on the besieged, and to seize positions which would favour ulterior operations. Ploughed Hill, Cobble Hill, and Lechmere's Point, were successively occupied and fortified. His approaches were carried within half a mile of the works on Bunker's hill; and his guns drove their floating batteries from their stations, and protected others constructed under his orders.

Hitherto, the object of the war had been a redress of grievances. The language, that it was a war against a corrupt administration, had been carefully observed; and allegiance to the British crown was universally avowed. The progress, however, of the public mind towards independence, though slow, was certain; and measures were necessarily taken, which apparently tended to that object. Among these, was the act of establishing temporary governments in place of that revolutionary system which followed the suspension of the ancient institutions.

The first application on this subject was made by Massachusetts;[1] and her example was soon followed by other colonies. These applications could not fail to draw forth the sentiments of members on the very interesting question of separation from the mother country. They who wished to lead public opinion to independence, were desirous of establishing a regular government in each province, entirely competent to the administration of its affairs; while they who were hostile to that event, opposed every measure which might either incline the colonies towards it, or strengthen the opinion in Great Britain, that it was the real object of all who had resisted the legislative supremacy of parliament. A resolution was with difficulty obtained in the case of New Hampshire, which formed a precedent for others of the same nature, recommending to the provincial convention to call a full and free representation of the people, who should establish such form of government as would best promote the general happiness, and most effectually secure peace and good order in the colony, during the continuance of the present dispute with Great Britain. Without this last clause, which still maintained the appearance of preserving the ancient connexion with the parent state, the recommendation would not have been made. About the same time, congress also resolved that it would be extremely dangerous to the liberties and welfare of America, for any colony separately to petition the king or either house of parliament.

Having taken into consideration a proclamation, declaring certain persons in the colonies to have forgotten their allegiance, and to be in a state of open rebellion, and threatening with punishment those who should be found carrying on correspondence with them;—congress declared, "in the name of the people of these United Colonies, and by the authority according to the purest maxims of representation derived from them, that whatever punishment shall be inflicted upon any persons in the power of their enemies, for favouring, aiding, or abetting the cause of American liberty, shall be retaliated in the same kind, and in the same degree, upon those in their power, who have favoured, aided, or abetted, or shall favour, aid, or abet the system of ministerial oppression."

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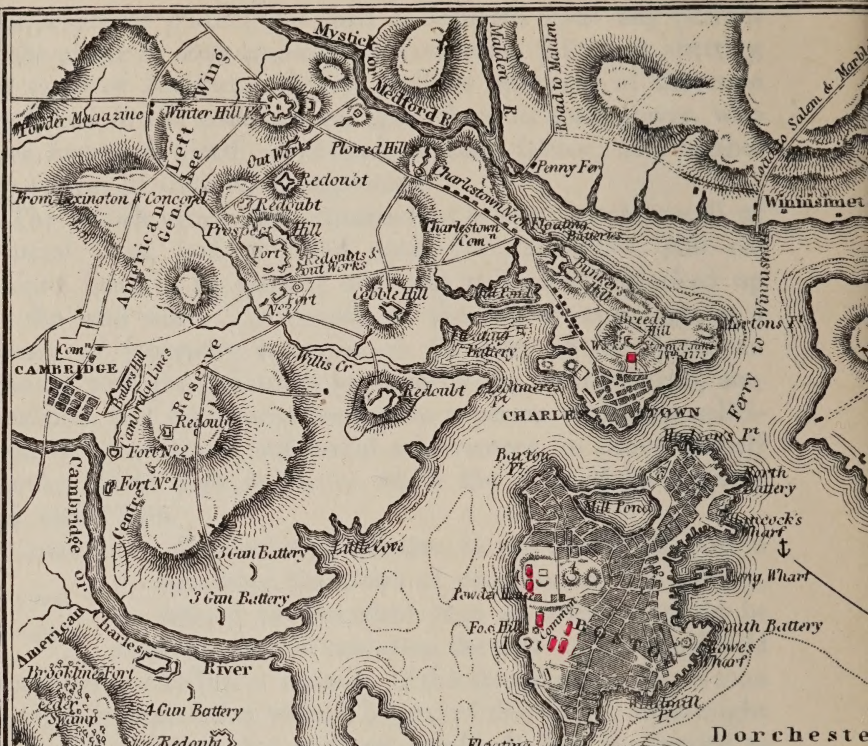
[1] On this application congress recommended that an assembly and council should be chosen in the usual way, who should exercise the powers of government until a Governor of his Majesty's appointment should consent to govern the colony according to its charter.

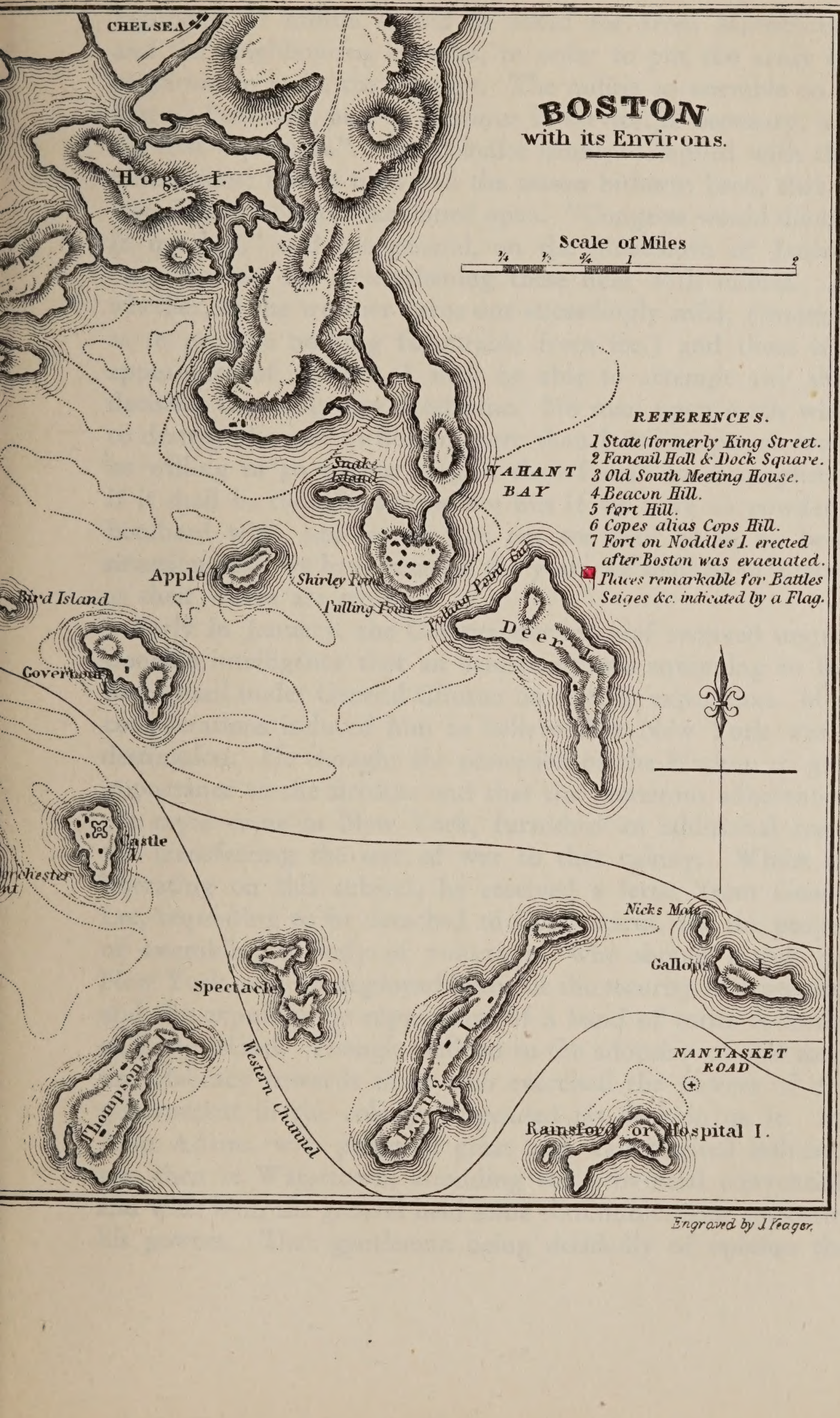
The British army, the command of which, on the recall of General Gage, had devolved upon General Howe, still remained inactive in Boston; and was still closely blocked up on the land side. The history of this winter campaign, is a history of successive struggles on the part of the American general, with the difficulties imposed by the want of arms, ammunition, and permanent troops, on a person extremely solicitous, by some grand and useful achievement, to prove himself worthy of the high station to which the voice of his country had called him.

1776. January.

Considering the resolution relative to the attack on Boston as indicating the desire of congress on that subject, he assured the president that an attempt would be made to put it in execution the first moment he should perceive a probability of success. If this should not occur, as soon as might be expected or wished, he prayed that his situation might be recollected, and that congress would do him the justice to believe, that circumstances, not inclination on his part, occasioned the delay. "It is not," said he, "in the pages of history to furnish a case like ours. To maintain a post within musket shot of the enemy for six months together, without *ammunition;* and at the same time, to disband one army and recruit another, within that distance of twenty-odd British regiments, is more than, probably, ever was attempted. But if we succeed as well in the latter, as we have hitherto done in the former, I shall think it the most fortunate event of my whole life."

In the month of January a council of war, at which Mr. John Adams, a member of congress, and Mr. Warren, president of the provincial congress of Massachusetts, assisted: Resolved, "that a vigorous attempt ought to be made on the ministerial troops in Boston, before they can be reinforced in the spring, if the means can be provided, and a favourable opportunity should offer." It was farther advised, "that thirteen


Mystic
or Medford R.
Malden R.
Road to Malden
Road to Salem & Marble
Powder Magazine
Winter Hill
Left Wing
American Gen.l Lee
Out Works
Plowed Hill
Redoubt
Charlestown Neck
Penny Fer.
Winnismet
From Lexington & Concord
Redoubt
Prospect Hill
Fort
Redoubts & Out Works
Charlestown Com.n
Floating Batteries
Bunker Hill
Ferry to Winnismet
Fort No. 3
Cobble Hill
Mill Pond
Breeds Hill
Works
Mortons Pt.
Floating Battery
Com.n
CAMBRIDGE
Butlers Hill
Cambridge Lines
Reserve
Willis Cr.
Redoubt
Lechmere Pt.
CHARLESTOWN
Redoubt
Barton Pt.
Hudsons Pt.
Fort No. 2
Fort No. 1
Centre
Cambridge or Charles River
Mill Pond
North Battery
Hancock's Wharf
3 Gun Battery
Little Cove
Long Wharf
3 Gun Battery
Powder House
Fox Hill
Common
BOSTON
South Battery
Rowes Wharf
American
Brookline Fort
Cedar Swamp
4 Gun Battery
Redoubt
Windmill Pt.
Dorchester Flats
Floating Battery
Clock & Gun Batt.
Adv. Lines
BOSTON NECK
Nooks Hill
Muddy R.
3 Gun Battery
George Tavern
Redoubt
Stony Brook
Roxbury Lines
Dorchester Heights
3 Gun Batt.
Brookline
ROXBURY
DORCHESTER NECK
Dorchester Lines
American
Redoubt
Road to Providence & Rhode I.
Roxbury Fort
Right wing
Gen. Ward
DORCHESTER



BOSTON
with its Environs.

REFERENCES.
1 State (formerly King Street.
2 Faneuil Hall & Dock Square.
3 Old South Meeting House.
4 Beacon Hill.
5 Fort Hill.
6 Copes alias Cops Hill.
7 Fort on Noddles I. erected after Boston was evacuated.
🟥 Places remarkable for Battles Seiges &c. indicated by a Flag.

Scale of Miles
¼
½
¾
1
2
CHELSEA
Hog I.
Snake Island
NAHANT BAY
Apple I.
Shirley Point
Pulling Point
Pulling Point Gut
Bird Island
Deer I.
Governors I.
Castle I.
Dorchester
Nicks Mate
Gallops I.
Spectacle I.
Thompsons I.
Western Channel
Long I.
NANTASKET ROAD
Rainsford or Hospital I.

Engraved by J. Yeager.

regiments of militia should be asked for from Massachusetts and the neighbouring colonies, in order to put the army in a condition to make the attempt. The militia to assemble on the first of February, and to continue in service, if necessary, until the first of March." The colonies readily complied with these requisitions; but so mild had the season hitherto been, that the waters about Boston continued open. "Congress would discover in my last," said the general, on the nineteenth of January, "my motives for strengthening these lines with militia. But whether, as the weather turns out exceedingly mild, (insomuch as to promise nothing favourable from ice,) and there is no appearance of powder, I shall be able to attempt any thing decisive, time only can determine. No man upon earth wishes to destroy the nest in Boston more than I do; no person would be willing to go greater lengths than I shall to accomplish it, if it shall be thought adviseable; but if we have no powder to bombard with, nor ice to pass on, we shall be in no better situation than we have been all the year: we shall be in a worse, as their works are stronger."

Early in January, the Commander-in-chief received unquestionable intelligence that an armament was equipping in Boston, to sail under General Clinton on a secret expedition. Many considerations induced him to believe that New York was its destination. He thought the possession of the Hudson of great importance to the British: and that the numerous adherents to the royal cause in New York, furnished an additional reason for transferring the seat of war to that colony. Whilst deliberating on this subject, he received a letter from General Lee, requesting to be detached to Connecticut, for the purpose of assembling a body of volunteers, who should march into New York, and be employed both for the security of that place, and the expulsion or suppression of a band of tories collecting on Long Island. Though inclined to the adoption of this measure, delicacy towards those who exercised the powers of civil government in the colony, suspended his decision on it. Mr. John Adams, who possessed great and well merited influence, was then at Watertown, attending the provincial convention; and with him, the general held some communications respecting his powers. That gentleman being decidedly of opinion that they extended to the case, General Lee was detached, with instructions to raise a body of volunteers in Connecticut, to reinforce the battalions of New Jersey and New York, which were placed under his command. His orders were to proceed to New York; to examine the fortifications of the city, and up the river; to put them in the best possible state of defence; to disarm all persons whose conduct rendered them justly suspected of designs unfriendly to the government, especially those on Long Island; and to collect the arms and ammunition in their possession, for the use of the army.

No difficulty was found in raising the volunteers required from Connecticut. The people of that province were zealous and enterprising, and Governor Trumbull having sanctioned the measure, troops were immediately embodied, and Lee commenced his march for New York at the head of twelve hundred men.

The inhabitants of that place were much alarmed at his approach. Captain Parker of the Asia man of war had threatened that he would destroy the town in the event of its being entered by any considerable body of provincials; and it was believed that these threats would be executed.

A committee of safety, which had been appointed to exercise the powers of government during the recess of the provincial congress, addressed a letter to General Lee, expressing astonishment at the report that he was about to enter the town

February.

without previously intimating his design, and pressing him earnestly not to pass the confines of Connecticut, until they could have further explantions with him.

Holding in utter contempt the threats of Captain Parker, Lee continued his march; and, in a letter[1] to congress, represented in such strong terms the impolicy of leaving the military arrangements for New York under the control of the local government, that congress appointed three of their own body, to consult with him and the council of safety, respecting the defence of the place; and instructed him to obey the directions of that committee.

Lee soon acquired that ascendancy which is the prerogative of a superior mind, over those who were sent for his government, and they directed him to execute whatever he suggested. A plan recommended by him, for fortifying the city and preserving its connexion with Long Island, was adopted, and prosecuted with vigour.

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[1] See note, No. V, at the end of the volume.

General Clinton arrived almost at the same instant with General Lee, but without troops. He said openly, that none were coming; that no hostilities were contemplated against New York; and that he was, himself, merely on a visit to his friend Tryon. "If it be really so," added General Lee, in his letter containing this communication, "it is the most whimsical piece of civility I ever heard of." General Clinton did not affect to conceal that his real object was to proceed to North Carolina, where he expected that five regiments from Europe would join the small force he should carry with him.

About the middle of February, the cold was intense, and the ice became sufficiently firm to bear the troops. General Washington was now disposed to execute the bold plan he had formed, of attacking General Howe in Boston; but a council of war being almost unanimous against the measure, it was abandoned. The want of ammunition for the artillery was a principal inducement to this opinion.

The attempt, probably, would not have succeeded, and must certainly have been attended with considerable loss. But the advice of the council seems to have been adopted with regret. In communicating their opinion to congress, the general observed, "Perhaps the irksomeness of my situation may have given different ideas to me, from those which influence the gentlemen I consulted; and might have inclined me to put more to the hazard than was consistent with prudence. If it had this effect, I am not sensible of it, as I endeavoured to give the subject all the consideration a matter of such importance required. True it is, and I can not help acknowledging, that I have many disagreeable sensations on account of my situation; for, to have the eyes of the whole continent fixed on me, with anxious expectation of hearing some great event, and to be restrained in every military operation for want of the necessary means to carry it on, is not very pleasing; especially as the means used to conceal my weakness from the enemy, conceal it also from our friends, and add to their wonder."

Late in February, various appearances among the British troops indicated an intention to evacuate Boston; but as these appearances might be deceptive, and he had now received a small supply of powder, General Washington determined to prosecute vigorously a plan he had formed, to force General Howe either to come to an action, or to abandon the town.

Since the allowance of a bounty, recruiting had been more successful; and the regular force had been augmented to rather more than fourteen thousand men. In addition to these troops, the Commander-in-chief had called to his aid about six thousand of the militia of Massachusetts. Thus reinforced, he determined to take possession of the heights of Dorchester, and to fortify them. As the possession of this post would enable him to annoy the ships in the harbour and the soldiers in the town, he was persuaded that a general action would ensue. But if this hope should be disappointed, his purpose was to make the works on the heights of Dorchester only preparatory to seizing and fortifying Nook's Hill, and the points opposite the south end of Boston, which commanded the harbour, a great part of the town, and the beach from which an embarkation must take place in the event of a retreat.

To facilitate the execution of this plan, a heavy bombardment and cannonade were commenced on the town and on the British lines, which were repeated the two succeeding nights. On the last of them, immediately after the firing had begun, a strong detachment, under the command of General Thomas, took possession of the heights without opposition. Such was their activity and industry through the night that, although the ground was almost impenetrable, the works were sufficiently advanced by the morning, nearly to cover them. When daylight disclosed their operations to the British, a considerable degree of embarrassment appeared, and an ineffectual fire was commenced on the party in possession of the heights, who in turn opened a battery on the besieged; and continued with unremitting labour to strengthen their position.

March 2.

It was necessary to dislodge the Americans from the heights, or to evacuate the town; and General Howe, as had been foreseen, determined to embrace the former part of the alternative. Three thousand chosen men, to be commanded by Lord Percy, were ordered on this service. These troops were embarked, and fell down to the castle, in order to proceed up the river to the intended scene of action; but were scattered by a furious storm, which disabled them from immediately prosecuting the enterprise. Before they could again be in readiness for the attack, the works were made so strong, that the attempts to storm them was thought unadviseable, and the evacuation of the town became inevitable.

In the expectation that the flower of the British troops would be employed against the heights of Dorchester, General Washington had concerted a plan for availing himself of that occasion, to attack Boston itself. The storm which defeated the proposed attack on the heights defeated this enterprise also.

The determination to evacuate Boston was soon communicated. A paper signed by some of the select men of the town, and brought out with a flag, stated the fact. This paper was accompanied by propositions said to be made on the part of General Howe, but not signed by him, relative to the security of the town, and the peaceable embarkation of his army. As these propositions were not addressed to the Commander-in-chief, and were not authenticated by the signature of General Howe, nor by any act obligatory on him, General Washington thought it improper directly to notice them; and ordered the officer to whom they were delivered to return an answer stating the reasons why they were not treated with more attention. The determination, however, to continue his advances and to secure Nook's Hill, was changed; and considerable detachments were moved towards New York, before the actual evacuation of Boston. This event took place on the 17th of March; and, in a few days, the whole fleet sailed out of Nantasket roads, directing its course eastward.

The recovery of this important town gave great joy to the United Colonies. Congress passed a vote of thanks to the General and his army, "for their wise and spirited conduct in the siege and acquisition of Boston;" and directed a medal of gold to be struck in commemoration of the event.

As soon as the British fleet had put to sea, the American army proceeded by divisions to New York, where it arrived on the 14th of April.

During the siege of Boston, an altercation concerning prisoners took place between the commanders of the respective armies, which was viewed with great interest throughout America. The character of the war—a war between a sovereign and those who professed to be his subjects, led to a course of conduct on the part of the British General, which the actual state of things did not justify.

General Gage, as Governor of Massachusetts, had received all the irritations of which his mind was susceptible—irritations which seemed to have had no inconsiderable influence over his conduct as Commander-in-chief. He regarded the Americans merely as rebels; and treated them as if the great national resistance they were making on principle, was to be viewed as the act of a few daring and turbulent individuals, rising against laws of unquestionable obligation, who would soon be quelled, and punished for their disobedience of legitimate authority. In this spirit, he threw some distinguished gentlemen of Boston, and the American officers and soldiers who fell into his hands, into the common jail of felons; and treated them, without respect to military rank or condition, not as prisoners of war, but as state criminals.

General Washington remonstrated very seriously against this unjustifiable measure. Considering political opinion entirely out of the question, and "conceiving the obligations of humanity, and the claims of rank, to be universally binding, except in the case of retaliation;" he expressed the hope he had entertained, "that they would have induced, on the part of the British General, a conduct more comformable to the rights they gave." While he claimed the benefits of these rights, he declared his determination "to be regulated entirely, in his conduct towards the prisoners who should fall into his hands, by the treatment which those in the power of the British General should receive."

To this letter, a haughty and intemperate answer was returned, retorting the complaints concerning the treatment of prisoners, and affecting to consider it as an instance of clemency, that the cord was not applied to those whose imprisonment was complained of. To this answer, General Washington gave a manly and dignified reply, which was, he said, "to close their correspondence perhaps forever;" and which concluded with saying, "If your officers, our prisoners, receive from me a treatment different from what I wished to show them, they and you will remember the occasion of it."

The result of this correspondence was communicated to the council of Massachusetts,[1] who were requested to order the British officers then on parole to be confined in close jail, and the soldiers to be sent to such place of security as the general court should direct.

On the recall of General Gage, the command devolved on General Howe, whose conduct was less exceptionable; and this rigorous treatment of prisoners was relaxed.

Not long after this correspondence with General Gage, while Montgomery was employed in the siege of St. John's, Colonel Ethan Allen was captured in a bold and rash attempt on Montreal. Under the pretext of his having acted without authority, he was put in irons, and sent to England as a traitor.

While he was yet in Canada, congress requested the Commander-in-chief to inquire into the fact. He addressed a letter to Sir William Howe, requiring explanations on it, and assuring him that General Prescot, who had been taken in Canada, and was understood to have contributed to the severities inflicted on Colonel Allen, should receive exactly the fate of that officer.

General Howe, not holding any authority in Canada, or not choosing to enter fully into this subject, General Schuyler was directed to make particular inquiries into the conduct of Prescot; and congress, on being informed of the inefficacy of the application to General Howe, ordered that officer into close jail.

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[1] In the early part of the war, congress had appointed no commissary of prisoners; nor had the government taken upon itself the custody of them. They were entrusted for safe keeping to the respective legislatures and committees, to whom it was necessary to apply for the execution of every order respecting them.

CHAPTER III

During these transactions, events of great interest were passing still further north.

Serious dissatisfaction prevailed in Canada. The measures of administration had disquieted the British settlers, 1775. without conciliating the ancient inhabitants. At the same time, the regular troops had been chiefly ordered to Boston, and the province left almost entirely undefended. These facts were known in the United Colonies. It was also known that military stores to an immense amount had been deposited in Quebec, and that preparations were making to invade the colonies from that quarter. The possession of that country was believed to be all important; and its present temper countenanced the opinion, that its weight would be thrown into the scale of that party, which should first show a force in June. it sufficient for the protection of its inhabitants. The facility with which Crown Point and Ticonderoga had been taken, and the command of the lakes George and Champlain acquired, added to the motives already stated, inspired congress with the daring design of anticipating the plans meditated in Canada, by taking possession of that province.

In June, 1775, a resolution passed that body, directing General Schuyler to repair to Ticonderoga, and take the proper measures for securing that post and Crown Point, and for retaining the command of the lakes. He was, at the same time authorized, if he should find the measure not disagreeable to the Canadians, to take possession of St. John's and Montreal, and to pursue any other steps which might have a tendency to promote the peace and security of the United Colonies.

Near three thousand men from New England and New York were designed for this service. A number of batteaux were directed to be built at Ticonderoga and Crown Point, to convey them along lake Champlain, and fifty thousand dollars in specie were voted for the expenses of the army in Canada.

General Schuyler, who was at New York when this important command was confided to him, hastened to Ticonderoga, in order to make the necessary arrangements for the enterprise.

The troops of that department, belonging to different colonies, stationed at different places, and acknowledging no one commanding officer, were found in a state of entire disorganization. The stores were misapplied, or wasted; no subordination nor camp discipline was observed; and had the enemy been in a condition to attempt to *coup de main*, Ticonderoga and Crown Point would have been lost, with as much facility as they had been acquired.

September.

Schuyler immediately commenced the task of preparing vessels for the transportation of the troops; a task the more laborious and tedious, as the timber for the batteaux was then to be procured from the woods. Before the preparations were complete, or the soldiers destined for the expedition were assembled, the impatience expressed by the discontented in Canada rendered an immediate movement adviseable. Orders were therefore given to General Montgomery to embark with the troops then in readiness; and General Schuyler having directed the expected reinforcements to rendezvous at the Isle Aux Noix, followed and joined him before he reached that place.

Circular letters to the Canadians, exhorting them to rouse and assert their liberties, and declaring, that the Americans entered their country, not as enemies, but as friends and protectors, were immediately dispersed among them; and to improve the favourable impression which had been made, it was determined to advance directly to St. John's. On the sixth of September, the American army, amounting to about one thousand men, entirely destitute of artillery, embarked on the Sorel, and proceeding down that river, landed within a mile and a half of the fort. The intelligence received during the evening, determined them to return to the Isle Aux Noix, and wait for their remaining troops and artillery.

The Isle Aux Noix lies at the junction of the Sorel with lake Champlain; and to prevent the armed vessels at St. John's from entering the latter, a boom was drawn across the narrow channel, at the point of union between those waters.

While at that place, General Schuyler became so ill as to be confined to his bed; and the command devolved on Montgomery.

Sept. 25.

October.

Late in September the artillery was brought up; and reinforcements arrived, which augmented the army to nearly two thousand men;—upon which Montgomery again proceeded to the investment of St. John's. This place was garrisoned by five or six hundred regulars, with about two hundred Canadian militia, and was well provided with artillery and military stores. The army of Canada, as well as the other armies of the United Colonies, was almost entirely without powder; and, of consequence, the siege advanced slowly. Its necessities in this respect, were fortunately relieved by the capture of fort Chamblée, which, being supposed to be covered by St. John's, was not in a defensible condition. In this place, about one hundred and twenty barrels of gunpowder were taken, after which the siege of St. John's was prosecuted with vigour; but the garrison made a resolute defence, and for some time indulged the hope of being relieved.[1]

Colonel M‘Clean, a veteran officer, with his regiment of royal highland emigrants, and a few hundred Canadians, was posted near the junction of the Sorel with the St. Lawrence. General Carleton was at Montreal, where he had collected about a thousand men, chiefly Canadians. At the head of these troops, he hoped to effect a junction with M‘Clean, after which he designed to march with his whole force against Montgomery, and endeavour to raise the siege; but, on attempting to cross over from Montreal, he was encountered and entirely defeated at Longueisle by a detachment of the American troops under Colonel Warner. Another party advanced on M‘Clean. Being entirely abandoned by his Canadians so soon as they were informed of the defeat of the governor, and having also received information that Arnold was approaching Point Levi, M‘Clean retreated to Quebec. The Americans occupied the post he had abandoned, and erected batteries on a point of land at the junction of the Sorel with the St. Lawrence; where they also constructed several armed rafts and floating batteries, in order to prevent Carleton with the vessels at Montreal from escaping down the river.

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[1] Annual Register.

Montgomery was pressing the siege of St. John's with great vigour, and had advanced his works near the fort, when the account of the success at Longueisle reached him. On receiving this intelligence, he sent a flag by one of the prisoners, with a letter to Major Preston, the commanding officer, demanding a surrender of the place. All hopes of relief having now vanished, the garrison capitulated, on being allowed the honours of war. Nov. 3.

Scarcely was this first success obtained, when the consequences of short enlistments began to be felt. The time of service for which the troops had engaged being about to expire, great difficulty was experienced in prevailing on them to proceed farther; and before the General could induce them to march against Montreal, he was under the necessity of stipulating explicitly, that all who wished it should be discharged at that place. Having effected this compromise, he proceeded against Montreal; while his floating batteries, under Colonel Easton, advanced up the St. Lawrence, and not only prevented the armed vessels of the enemy from escaping to Quebec, but drove them still higher up the river.

Montreal was not in a condition to be defended. After engaging to allow the Canadians their own laws, the free exercise of their religion, and the privilege of governing themselves, Montgomery took peaceable possession of the town; and Governor Carleton retired to his flotilla. While preparations were making to attack these vessels, the Governor was conveyed in a boat with muffled oars down the river, in a dark night, and made his escape to Quebec. The fleet soon afterwards surrendered, and the General prepared, with the utmost expedition, to proceed with the few troops who were willing to follow him, to the capital of Canada. Nov. 13.

Diminished as his army was by the discharge of those who claimed the performance of his engagements made at St. John's, it was necessary to leave a part of it at Montreal, St. John's, and Chamblée, to garrison those places—keep open the communication between Quebec and the United Colonies—preserve the dependence of the Canadians—overawe the Indians, and hold in check the garrisons above him at Detroit and Niagara. These essential objects, though provided for with the utmost possible economy of men, formed such deductions from his force, as to leave little more than three hundred soldiers to follow their General in the enterprise against Quebec.

August. Foreseeing that the whole force of Canada would be concentrated about Montreal, General Washington had planned an expedition against Quebec, to be carried on by a detachment from his camp before Boston, which was to march by the way of Kennebec river; and, passing through the dreary wilderness lying between the settled parts of Maine and the St. Lawrence, to enter Canada about ninety miles below Montreal.

The object of this hardy enterprise was to compel Carleton, either to draw his troops from the upper country and leave the passage open to the army invading the province by the way of the river Sorel, or, if he should maintain that position, to take possession of Quebec. All his accounts assured him that this place was unable to hold out against the force which would appear before it; and, if attacked by an American army before the return of Carleton, would surrender without firing a shot.

This arduous enterprise was committed to Colonel Arnold. About a thousand men, consisting of New England infantry, some volunteers,[1] a company of artillery under Captain Lamb, and three companies of riflemen, were selected for the service.

Such delays in expediting this detachment were occasioned by the derangements of the army, that Arnold could not commence his march until the middle of September.

The success of the expedition depending in a great measure on the friendly temper of the province against which it was directed, the instructions given to Arnold earnestly inculcated the cultivation of a good understanding with the Canadians; and even enjoined an abandonment of the enterprise, should this sudden invasion of their country threaten to irritate them, and induce them to take up arms against the United Colonies. He was furnished with about one thousand pounds in specie to

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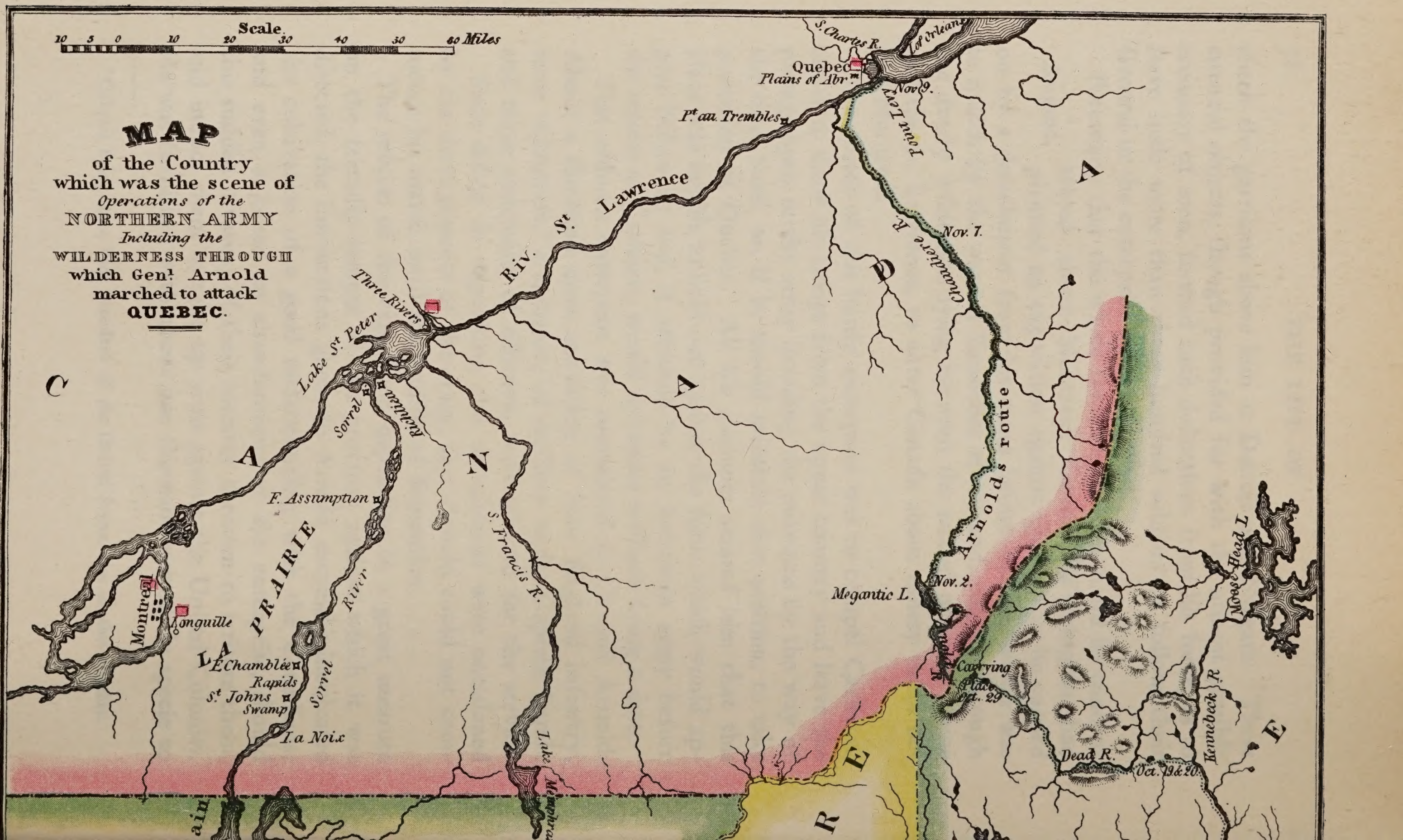
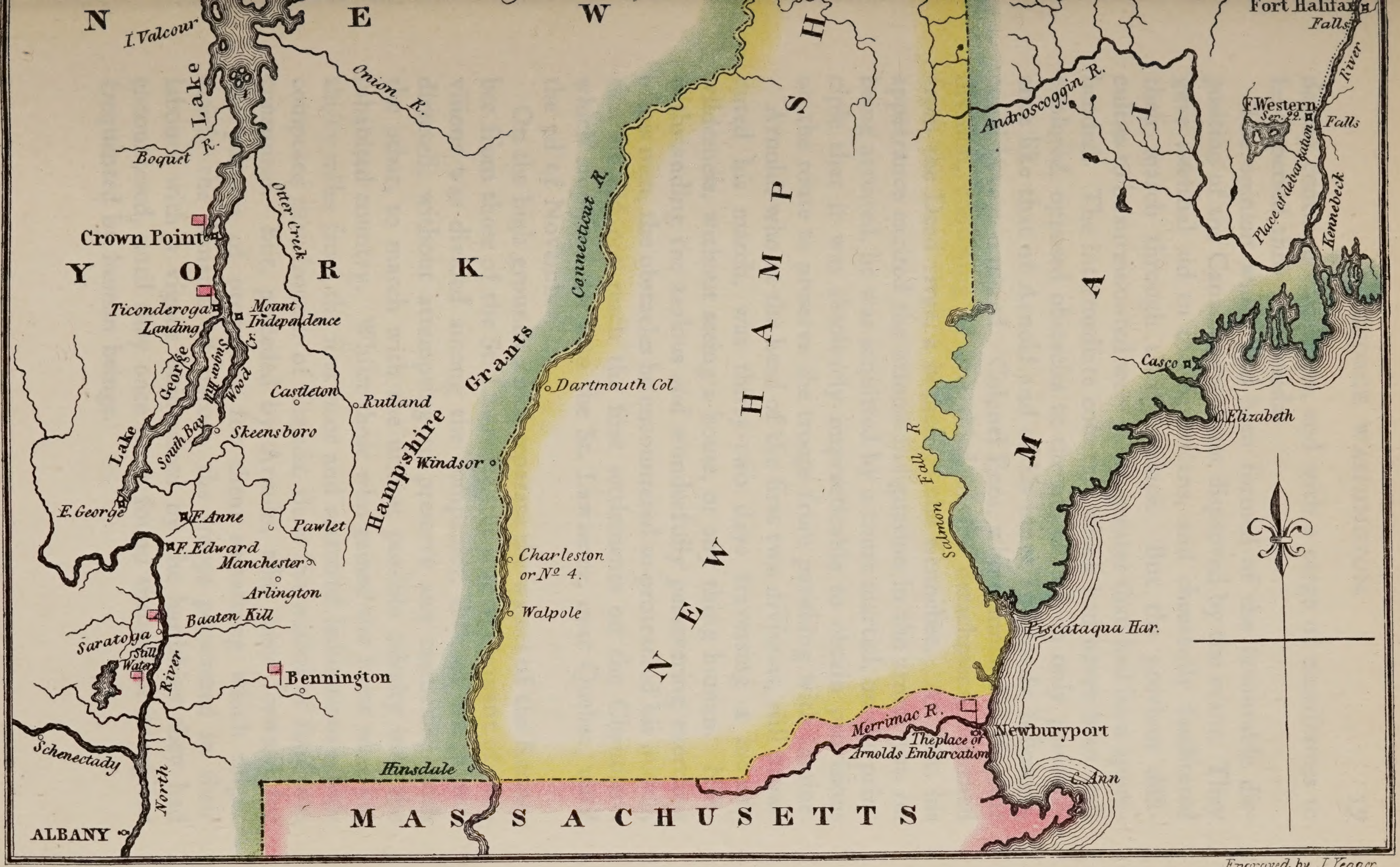
[1] Colonel Burr, since Vice President of the United States, was of this number.



MAP
of the Country
which was the scene of
Operations of the
NORTHERN ARMY
Including the
WILDERNESS THROUGH
which Genl. Arnold
marched to attack
QUEBEC.

Scale.
10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 Miles
S. Charles R.
I. of Orleans
Quebec
Plains of Abrm.
Nov. 9.
Point Levy
Pt. au Trembles
Riv. St. Lawrence
Nov. 7.
Chaudiere R.
Three Rivers
Lake St. Peter
Sorrel
Richlieu
C
A
N
A
D
A
F. Assumption
S. Francis R.
Arnolds route
Megantic L.
Nov. 2.
Arnold
R.
Carrying Place
Oct. 29
Moose Head L.
Kennebeck R.
Dead R.
Oct. 19 & 20.
E
R
E
Montreal
Longuille
LA PRAIRIE
River
Sorrel
F. Chamblée
Rapids
St. Johns
Swamp
I. a Noix
Lake Memphra
ain


N E W
Y O R K
N E W H A M P S H
M A I
M A S S A C H U S E T T S
I. Valcour
Lake
Boquet R.
Onion R.
Otter Creek
Crown Point
Ticonderoga
Landing
Mount Independence
Lake George
Sugar Hill
Wood Cr.
South Bay
Skeensboro
Castleton
Rutland
Hampshire Grants
Connecticut R.
Dartmouth Col
Windsor
Charleston or No 4.
Walpole
Hinsdale
F. George
F. Anne
F. Edward
Pawlet
Manchester
Arlington
Baaten Kill
Saratoga
Still Water
River
Bennington
Schenectady
North
ALBANY
Fort Halifax
Falls
River
F. Western
Sep. 22.
Falls
Place of debarkation
Kennebeck
Androscoggin R.
Casco
C. Elizabeth
Salmon Fall R.
Piscataqua Har.
Merrimac R.
Newburyport
The place of Arnolds Embarcation
C. Ann

Engraved by J. Yeager.

defray contingent expenses, and with a cargo of manifestoes to be dispersed through Canada.

The opinion which had been formed of the favourable disposition of the Canadians was not disproved by the event. They gave essential aid to the Americans, and cheerfully facilitated their march through that province. But the previous difficulties to be surmounted were much greater than had been apprehended. The intermediate country, which had never been well explored, opposed obstacles to the march, which only perseverance like that of Arnold and of his brave and hardy followers, could have conquered. Colonel Enos, who commanded the rear division, consisting of one third of the detachment, returned from the Dead river, a branch of the Kennebec. At first, his appearance excited the utmost indignation in the army; yet, on being arrested, he was acquitted by a court martial, on the principle that it was absolutely impracticable to obtain provisions on the route to preserve the troops from perishing with famine.

Arnold, who at the head of the first two divisions, still prosecuted his march, was thirty-two days traversing a hideous wilderness, without seeing a house, or any thing human. Notwithstanding the zealous and wonderfully persevering exertions of his men, the obstacles he encountered so protracted his march, that he did not reach the first settlements on the Chaudiere, which empties itself into the St. Lawrence, near Quebec, until the 3d of November.

On the high grounds which separate the waters of the Kennebec from those of the St. Lawrence, the scanty remnant of provisions was divided among the companies; each of which was directed, without attempting to preserve any connexion with the other, to march with the utmost possible celerity into the inhabited country. Whilst those who gained the front were yet thirty miles from the first poor and scattered habitations which composed that frontier of Canada, their last morsel of food was consumed. But, preceded by Arnold, who went forward for the purpose of procuring for them something which might satisfy the demands of nature, the troops persevered in their labours with a vigour unimpaired by the hardships they had encountered, until they once more found themselves in regions frequented by human beings.

After a march of such unexampled fatigue, no more time was allowed for repose than was barely sufficient to collect the rear, and to refresh the men. During this short respite from toil, the address signed by General Washington was published, and every assurance given to the people, that they came to protect, and not to plunder them. The line of march was resumed; and, on the 9th of November, this gallant corps reached Point Levi, opposite Quebec.

The town was almost entirely without a garrison, and nothing could exceed the astonishment of its inhabitants. Could Arnold have immediately crossed the St. Lawrence, and have availed himself of the first consternation, it is believed that he might have entered the place without opposition; but a high wind, and the want of boats, rendered the passage of the river impossible.

One of his Indian messengers, despatched with letters to General Schuyler, had either betrayed him or been intercepted; and thus intelligence of his approach was communicated to Colonel M'Clean who was then at the mouth of the Sorel. Trembling for the capital of the province, that gallant veteran determined to throw himself into it, and endeavour to defend it. In the mean time, the winds continued so high for several nights as to render the passage of the river in the canoes which had been collected, too hazardous to be attempted; and it was only in the night that the Americans could hope to cross, because four ships of war were distributed at different stations in the river, and armed boats were employed to ply around them. Whilst the Americans were thus unavoidably detained on the south side of the St. Lawrence, Colonel M'Clean, with his corps of emigrants, entered the city.

Nov. 14.

At length the wind moderated; and Arnold determined to attempt the river. Eluding the armed vessels, and conquering a rapid current, he, with great difficulty and danger, crossed over in the night, and landed his little army about a mile and a half above the place which is rendered memorable by the disembarkation of Wolfe. The passage of the rugged cliffs which continue on the northern bank of the St. Lawrence for some distance above Quebec, being impracticable at this place, he marched down on the shore to Wolfe's

Cove, and ascending with his band of hardy followers the same precipice which had opposed such obstacles to the British hero; he, too, formed his small corps on the heights near the plains of Abraham.

The dangerous and difficult operations of crossing the river in canoes, whilst the passage was vigilantly guarded by ships of war, and of gaining the almost perpendicular heights of the opposite shore, were completed, soon after midnight, by the advance party, consisting of the rifle companies. While waiting for the residue of the detachment, a council of all the officers was held for the purpose of determining on their future measures. Although destitute of every implement required for an assault, Arnold proposed to march immediately against Quebec. He counted on surprising the place, and finding the gates open; but this opinion, which was not earnestly pressed, was overruled.

Though disappointed in the expectation of surprising Quebec, Arnold did not immediately relinquish the hope of obtaining possession of that important place. Not superior to the garrison in point of numbers, and without a single piece of artillery, he was obviously incapable of acting offensively; but he flattered himself that a defection in the town might yet put it in his hands. With this view, he paraded on the adjacent heights for some days, and sent two flags to demand a surrender. But the presence of Colonel M'Clean restrained those measures which the fears of the inhabitants dictated. Deeming any communication with the assailants dangerous, he refused to receive the flag, and fired on the officer who bore it. Intelligence was soon obtained, that the first alarm was visibly wearing off, and giving place to other sentiments unfavourable to the hope of gaining Quebec. Fears for the vast property contained in the town had united the disaffected; who were, at their own request, embodied and armed. The sailors too were landed, and placed at the batteries; and, by these means, the garrison had become more numerous than the American army.

After collecting those who had been left on the south side of the St. Lawrence, Arnold could not parade more than seven hundred men, and they were in no condition to risk an action. In their laborious march through the wilderness, nearly one third of their muskets had been rendered useless; and their ammunition had sustained such damage that the riflemen had not more than ten, nor the other troops more than six rounds for each man. Under these circumstances, it was thought most adviseable to retire to Point Aux Trembles, twenty miles above Quebec, and there await the arrival of Montgomery. On their march, they saw the vessel which conveyed General Carleton; and afterwards found he had been on shore at Point Aux Trembles, a few hours before they reached that place.[1]

Nov. 19.

In war, the success of the most judicious plans often depends on accidents not to be foreseen nor controlled. Seldom has the truth of this proposition been more clearly demonstrated, than in the issue of the expedition conducted by Colonel Arnold. The situation of Canada conformed exactly to the expectations of the American general. Not suspecting that so bold and difficult an enterprise could be meditated, its Governor had left Quebec entirely defenceless, and had drawn the strength of the province towards the lakes. Could Arnold have reached that place a few days sooner—could he even have crossed the river on his first arrival at Point Levi—or had Colonel Enos been able to follow the main body with his division of the detachment—every probability favours the opinion, that this hardy and well conceived expedition would have been crowned with the most brilliant success. Nay, more—had Arnold been careful to relieve the inhabitants of the town from all fears respecting their property, there is reason to believe, they would have refused to defend it. But although this bold enterprise was planned with judgment, and executed with vigour; although the means employed were adequate to the object; yet the concurrence of several minute and unfavourable incidents entirely defeated it, and deprived it of that eclat to which it was justly entitled.

Having clothed his almost naked troops at Montreal, General Montgomery, at the head of about three hundred men, proceeded with his usual expedition to join Colonel Arnold at Point Aux Trembles, where he supplied the troops of that officer with clothes provided at Montreal; and afterwards marched with their united forces directly to Quebec. But, before his arrival, Governor Carleton, who had entered the town, was making every preparation for a vigorous defence. Dec. 5. The garrison now consisted of about fifteen hundred men, of whom eight hundred were militia, and between four and five hundred were seamen. Montgomery's effective force was stated, by himself, at only eight hundred. His situation would have filled with despair a mind less vigorous, less sanguine, and less brave. His numbers were not sufficient to render success probable, according to any common principle of calculation; and the prospect of their being diminished might be rationally entertained. But, relying on their courage, on himself and his fortune, and on the fears of the garrison; stimulated, too, by the high expectations formed throughout America of his success, and by the dread of disappointing those expectations, he determined to lay immediate siege to the town.

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[1] In the account of this expedition much use has been made of a journal kept by Colonel Heth who served in it as a Lieutenant in Morgan's company of riflemen.

In a few days he opened a six gun battery within seven hundred yards of the walls; but his artillery was too light to make a breach, and he did not calculate on any effect from it. His object was to amuse the garrison, and conceal his real design.

Although the troops supported the excessive hardships to which they were exposed, with constancy and firmness, Montgomery feared that such continued sufferings would overcome them; and, as he would soon have no legal authority to retain a part of them, he apprehended that he should be abandoned by that part. Impressed with the real necessity of taking decisive steps, and impelled by his native courage, this gallant officer determined to risk an assault.

Of such materials was his little army composed, that the most desperate hardihood could not hope to succeed in the purposed attempt, unless it should receive the approbation of all his troops. It was therefore necessary, not only to consult the officers individually on this delicate subject, but to obtain also the cheerful assent of the soldiers to the meditated enterprise. The proposition was at first received coldly by a part of Arnold's corps, who were, by some means, disgusted with their commanding officer; but the influence of Morgan, who was particularly zealous for an assault, and who held up as a powerful inducement, the rights conferred by the usages of war on those who storm a fortified town, at length prevailed; and the measure was almost unanimously approved.

Whilst the general was preparing for the assault, the garrison received intelligence of his design from a deserter. This circumstance induced him to change the plan, which had originally been to attack both the upper and lower towns at the same time. That finally adopted, was to divide the army into four parts; and while two of them, consisting of Canadians under Major Livingston, and a small party under Major Brown, were to distract the garrison by making two feints against the upper town at St. John's and Cape Diamond; the other two, led, the one by Montgomery in person, and the other by Arnold, were to make real attacks on opposite sides of the lower town. After gaining that, it would yet be extremely difficult to conquer the obstacles to be surmounted in forcing their way to the upper town; but, as all the wealth of the city would then be in their power, it was confidently expected that the inhabitants, to secure their property, would compel the governor to capitulate.

Dec. 31.

Between four and five in the morning, the signal was given; and the several divisions moved to the assault under a violent storm of snow. The plan was so well concerted, that from the side of the river St. Lawrence, along the fortified front round to the basin, every part seemed equally threatened.[1] Montgomery advanced at the head of the New York troops, along the St. Lawrence, by the way of Aunce de Mere, under Cape Diamond. The first barrier on this side, at the Pot Ash, was defended by a battery, in which a few pieces of artillery were mounted; about two hundred paces in front of which was a block-house and picket. The guard placed at the block-house being chiefly Canadians, after giving a random and harmless fire, threw away their arms, and fled in confusion to the barrier. Their terrors were communicated to those who defended this important pass; and from the intelligence afterwards received by the American prisoners in Quebec, it appears that the battery was for a time deserted.

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[1] Letter of Governor Carleton.

Unfortunately, the difficulties of the route rendered it impossible for Montgomery to avail himself instantly of this first impression. Cape Diamond, around which he was to make his way, presents a precipice, the foot of which is washed by the river, where such enormous and rugged masses of ice had been piled on each other, as to render the way almost impassable.[1] Along the scanty path leading under the projecting rocks of the precipice, the Americans pressed forward in a narrow file, until they reached the block-house and picket. Montgomery, who was himself in front, assisted with his own hand to cut down or pull up the pickets, and open a passage for his troops: but the roughness and difficulty of the way had so lengthened his line of march, that he found it absolutely necessary to halt a few minutes. Having re-assembled about two hundred men, he advanced boldly and rapidly at their head, to force the barrier. One or two persons had now ventured to return to the battery, and seizing a slow-match, discharged a gun, when the American front was within forty paces of it. This single and accidental fire proved fatal to the enterprise. The general, with Captains M'Pherson and Cheeseman, the first of whom was his aid, together with his orderly sergeant and a private were killed upon the spot. The loss of their general, in whom their confidence had been so justly placed, discouraged the troops; and Colonel Campbell, on whom the command devolved, made no attempt to reanimate them. This whole division retired precipitately from the action, and left the garrison at leisure to direct its undivided force against Arnold.

At the common signal for the attack, the division commanded by his officer moved in files along the street of St. Roques towards the Saut de Matelots, where the first barrier had been constructed, and a battery of two twelve pounders erected. In imitation of Montgomery, he too led the forlorn hope in person, and was followed by Captain Lamb with his company of artillery, and a field piece mounted on a sled. Close in the rear of the artillery was the main body, in front of which was Morgan's company of riflemen, commanded by himself. The path along which the troops were to march was so narrow, that the two pieces of artillery in the battery were capable of raking with grape shot every inch of the ground; whilst the whole right flank was exposed to an incessant fire of musketry from the walls, and from the pickets of the garrison.

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[1] Annual Register.

In this order Arnold advanced along the St. Charles with the utmost intrepidity. The alarm was immediately given, and the fire on his flank commenced. As he approached the barrier, he received a musket ball in the leg which shattered the bone, and was carried off the field. Morgan rushed forward to the battery at the head of his company, and received from one of the pieces, almost at its mouth, a discharge of grape shot, which killed only one man. The barricade was instantly mounted, on which the battery was deserted without a discharge from another gun. The captain of the guard, with the greater number of his men, were made prisoners.

Morgan formed his troops in the streets within the barrier, and took into custody several English and Canadian burghers; but his situation soon became extremely critical. He was not followed by the main body of the division—he had no guide—and was, himself, totally ignorant of the situation of the town. It was yet dark—and he had not the slightest knowledge of the course to be pursued, or of the defences to be encountered. Under these circumstances, it was thought unadviseable to advance farther. They were soon joined by Lieutenant Colonel Green, and Majors Bigelow and Meigs, with several fragments of companies, so as to constitute altogether about two hundred men.

As the light of day began to appear, this gallant party was again formed, with Morgan's company in front; and, with one voice, loudly called on him to lead them against the second barrier, which was now known to be less than forty paces from them, though concealed by an angle of the street from their immediate view. Seizing the few ladders brought with them, they again rushed forward; and under an incessant fire from the battery, and from the windows overlooking it, applied their ladders to the barricade; and maintained for some time a fierce, and, on their part, a bloody contest. Exposed thus, in a narrow street, to a galling fire, and finding themselves unable to force the barrier, or to discharge more than one in ten of their fire arms—the violence of the storm having unfitted them for service; many of the assailants threw themselves into the stone houses on each side, which afforded them a shelter both from the storm and from the enemy. After continuing some time in this situation, Morgan proposed to cut their way back to the American camp. They were prevented from adopting this daring resolution, only by the suggestion that the attack led by Montgomery, of whose fate they were ignorant, might possibly be successful; and that, in the event of his having entered the opposite part of the town, their co-operation might be useful to him. On this account, they determined still to maintain their situation. But the force of the enemy increasing considerably, they soon perceived that they were no longer masters of their own destinies, and surrendered themselves prisoners of war.[1]

In this bold attack on Quebec, the loss on the part of the garrison was inconsiderable. That of the Americans was about four hundred men, three hundred and forty of whom were prisoners. It fell chiefly on Arnold's division. Captain Hendricks of the Pennsylvania riflemen, Lieutenant Humphries of Morgan's company, and Lieutenant Cooper of Connecticut, were among the slain. Captains Lamb and Hubbard, and Lieutenants Steele and Tisdale, were among the wounded. Every officer at the second barrier received several balls through his clothes, and some of them were severely scorched by the powder from the muzzles of the muskets discharged at them. But the loss most deplored, and most fatal to the hopes of the American army, was that of their general.

Richard Montgomery was a native of Ireland, and had served with reputation in the late war. After its conclusion he settled in New York, where he married an American lady, and took a decided part with the colonies in their contest with Great Britain. His military reputation was high throughout America. In the history of his achievements, while commanding in Canada, we perceive the bold, skilful, and active partizan; and, so far as a judgment can be formed of a capacity for conducting the movements of a large army from judicious management of a small one, we can not hesitate to allow him the talents of an able general. At the head of a small body of undisciplined troops, drawn from different colonies, unwilling to be commanded by a stranger, jealous of him in the extreme, often disposed to disobedience, and anxious for their homes, he conquered difficulties which not many would have ventured to meet; and, until his last fatal moment, was uniformly successful. In little more than two months, he made himself master of Canada, from the lakes to Quebec: and, as if determined to triumph over the climate itself, laid siege, in the depth of winter, to that important fortress. His measures seem to have been taken with judgment, and were certainly executed with great courage and unremitting exertion. When he appears to have risked much, and to have exposed his troops to excessive hardships, this line of conduct was not inconsiderately chosen. The state of his affairs left him only the alternative between attempting to storm Quebec, or abandoning the great object of the expedition. Nor was his attempt so hopeless a measure as the strength of the place, and the event might, at first view, induce us to suppose. The design was worthy of the lofty spirit which formed it; though hazardous, it was not desperate; and if great courage was required to crown it with success, great courage was employed in its execution. He counted, and with reason, on the fears of the garrison, and on the immense extent of ground to be guarded. Had he not fallen himself, or been deserted by his troops, it is even yet believed the enterprise would have succeeded. The progress made by Arnold's division gives great countenance to this opinion.

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[1] In this account of the attempt to storm Quebec, free use is made of Colonel Heth's journal.

To manifest the high sense entertained of his services, congress directed a monument, expressing the circumstances of his death and the gratitude of his country, to be erected to his memory.

1776. January.

The Americans, being no longer in a condition to continue the siege, retired about three miles from the city; where, though inferior in numbers to the garrison, they maintained the blockade. By preserving this bold countenance, they retained the confidence of the Canadians; which saved their affairs, for a time, from total ruin.

Governor Carleton was content to preserve Quebec, until the reinforcements he expected in the spring should enable him to act on the offensive. He therefore determined not to hazard an attack, with a garrison on which it was unsafe to rely; and Arnold, on whom the command had devolved, remained undisturbed. Although badly wounded, he retained his courage and activity; and, though deserted by those whose terms of service had expired, so as to be reduced at one time to about five hundred effective men, he discovered no disposition to sink under the weight of adverse fortune.

While the affairs of the colonies wore this gloomy aspect in Canada, congress was indulging sanguine hopes of annexing that province to the union. Nine regiments, including one to be raised in that colony, were voted for its defence during the ensuing campaign; and General Schuyler was directed to construct a number of batteaux at Ticonderoga, for the purpose of transporting the troops to the scene of action.

Whilst adopting these measures, congress received the melancholy intelligence of the disaster of the 31st December. Jan. 17. Far from being dispirited by this reverse of fortune, that body redoubled its exertions to hasten reinforcements to the army in Canada, and urged the several conventions to collect for its use all the specie they could obtain. These measures were, in some degree, accelerated by having been anticipated by the Commander-in-chief.[1]

The service in Canada being deemed of too much importance to be entrusted to Colonel, now Brigadier General Arnold, or to General Wooster; Feb. 17. and the health of General Schuyler not admitting of his proceeding to Quebec; General Thomas, an officer who had acquired reputation at Roxbury, was ordered to take command of the army in that province.

In the hope of exciting throughout Canada the sentiments which prevailed in the United Colonies, and of forming with it a perfect union, three commissioners, Mr. Franklin, Mr. Chase, and Mr. Carroll,[1] were deputed with full powers on this subject, and with instructions to establish a free press. These commissioners were directed to assure the people that they would be permitted to adopt such form of government as should be agreeable to themselves; to exercise freely all the rights of conscience; and to be considered as a sister colony, governed by the same general system of mild and equal laws which prevailed in the other colonies, with only such local differences as each might deem conducive to its own happiness. They were also instructed to inquire into the conduct of the American army, and to correct any irregularities which might be offensive to the people.

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[1] On the first intelligence received in the camp at Boston of the fate of Montgomery, General Washington, though extremely delicate respecting the assumption of power, without waiting for the orders of congress, had immediately requested the New England governments to raise several regiments to reinforce that army. This proceeding was approved by congress.

Congress seems to have entertained the opinion expressed by General Washington in a letter to General Schuyler, "that the Province could be secured only by laying hold of the affections of the people, and engaging them heartily in the common cause." In pursuance of this opinion, they adopted the magnanimous policy of compensating those individuals who had suffered for their adherence to the Americans.

In the mean time Arnold maintained the blockade of Quebec. But reinforcements were slow in arriving, notwithstanding every exertion to hasten them, and from the first of January to the first of March, the effective force before that place had never exceeded seven hundred men, and had often been as low as five hundred. In March, reinforcements arrived in greater numbers, and the army was increased to seventeen hundred; but this number was soon reduced by the small-pox, which had made its way into camp, where, in contempt of orders, it was propagated by inoculation.

To render the blockade in any degree effectual, this small army which occupied the island of Orleans and both sides of the St. Lawrence, was spread over a circuit of twenty-six miles, and divided by three ferries. The establishment of discipline had been impracticable, if attempted; and the Canadians were often injured and irritated. There is reason to believe that even General Arnold was disposed to think himself in the country of an enemy; and that, in repressing disorders, he did not exert that energy which he had always displayed conspicuously in the field.

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[1] They were accompanied by Mr. Carroll, a bishop of the Roman Catholic church.

Many causes combined to diminish the attachment originally manifested by the Canadians to the United Colonies. The necessities of his situation compelled General Arnold to issue a proclamation making paper money current, under the promise of redeeming it in four months, and denouncing those as enemies, who should refuse to receive it. The Canadians were unwilling to exchange their property or labour, for an article of such uncertain value; and the discontents excited by the attempt to force it on them were very considerable.

Another circumstance, which had great influence with reflecting men, was the obvious incompetence of the American force to its object. The Canadians had expected a powerful army—sufficient for the protection of the country; and their disappointment in this respect, produced a great change in their opinions and conduct.

The dissatisfaction arising from these causes was augmented by the priests. They, as a body, were never cordial in the American interest; and having been, since the death of Montgomery, very injudiciously neglected, had become almost universally hostile to the views of the United Colonies.

General Carleton was no stranger to the revolution which was taking place in the minds of the Canadians, and entertained the hope of raising the siege by their assistance. A detachment of about sixty men, from the garrison of Quebec, landed twelve leagues below the town on the south side of the river, and were joined by about two hundred and fifty Canadians, who were rapidly increasing in numbers, when they were suddenly attacked by a detachment sent by Arnold, which surprised their advance guard, killed a few, took some prisoners, and dispersed the residue.

As the season of the year approached when reinforcements from England might be expected, Arnold deemed it necessary to recommence active operations, and to resume the siege. His batteries were again erected, and were opened on the 2d of April, but without much effect. He had not weight of metal to make a breach in the wall, nor an engineer capable of directing a siege, nor artillerists who understood the management of the pieces.

On the 1st of April, Wooster had arrived, and, on the succeeding day, Arnold's horse fell with him, and so bruised one of his legs as to confine him to his bed for some time. Believing himself to be neglected, he obtained leave of absence as soon as he was able to move, and took the command at Montreal.

A considerable part of the army having become entitled to a discharge, no inducement could prevail on them to continue longer in so severe a service. This deduction from Wooster's April 15. force was the more sensibly felt, because the present situation of the roads, the lakes, and the St. Lawrence, suspended the arrival of the reinforcements destined for his aid.

Among the first who reached camp after this state of things took place, was General Thomas. He arrived on the 1st of May, and found an army consisting of nineteen hundred men; of whom, less than one thousand, including officers, were effective. Among these were three hundred entitled to discharge, who refused to do duty, and insisted importunately on being immediately dismissed. This small force was still more enfeebled by being so divided that it was impracticable to unite more than three hundred men at any one point. All the magazines contained but one hundred and fifty barrels of powder, and six days provisions; nor could adequate supplies from the country people be obtained, as the Canadians no longer manifested any disposition to serve them.

The river began to open below, and it was certain, that the British would seize the first moment of its being practicable, to relieve this important place. Amidst these unpromising circumstances, the hopes of taking Quebec appeared to General Thomas to be chimerical, and a longer continuance before the town both useless and dangerous. It was apparent that the first reinforcements which should arrive would deprive him entirely of the use of the river, and consequently would embarrass the removal of his sick, and military stores. No object remained to justify this hazard.

Under these impressions, he called a council of war, which May 5. unanimously determined, that the army was not in a condition to risk an assault—that the sick should be removed to the Three Rivers, and the artillery and other stores embarked in their boats, in order to move to a more defensible position. On the evening of the same day, intelligence was received that a British fleet was below; and, May 6. the next morning, five ships, which had, with much labour and danger, made their way up the river through the ice, appeared in sight. They soon entered the harbour, and landed some men whilst the Americans were assiduously employed in the embarkation of their sick and stores—an operation carried on the more slowly, because the first appearance of the ships deprived them of the aid expected from the teams and carriages of the Canadians.

About noon, Carleton made a sortie at the head of one thousand men, formed in two divisions, and supported by six field pieces. The Americans had thrown up no intrenchments, and could not bring into action more than three hundred men. Under these circumstances, victory was scarcely possible, and could have produced no important effect. General Thomas, therefore, with the advice of the field officers about him, determined not to risk an action, and ordered his troops to retreat up the river. This was done with much precipitation, and many of the sick, with all the military stores, fell into the hands of the enemy. The army continued its retreat to the Sorel, where General Thomas was seized with the small pox, of which he died.[1]

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[1] Whilst the troops of the United Colonies were flying from the vicinity of Quebec, an unexpected calamity befel them in a different quarter of that province.

Colonel Bedel, with three hundred and ninety continental troops and two field pieces, had been stationed at the Cedars, a point of land about forty miles above Montreal, which projected far into the St. Lawrence, and could be approached only on one side. Early in the spring, General Carleton had planned an expedition against this post, the execution of which was committed to Captain Forster, who commanded at an English station on Oswegachie. At the head of a company of regulars and a body of Indians, amounting in the whole to six hundred men, he appeared before the American works early in May. Two days previous to his appearance, Colonel Bedel had received intelligence of his approach; and, leaving the fort to be commanded by Major Butterfield, had proceeded himself to Montreal, to solicit assistance. Arnold, who then commanded at that place, immediately detached Major Sherburne to the Cedars with one hundred men; and prepared to follow, in person, at the head of a much larger force.

Although the place could have been easily defended, the besiegers having no artillery—Major Butterfield, intimidated by the threat, that should any Indians be killed during the siege, it would be out of the power of Captain Forster to restrain the savages from massacreing every individual of the garrison, consented to a capitulation, by which the whole party became prisoners of war. The next day, Major

The Americans were much dissatisfied with the conduct of this gentleman. To him they, in some degree attributed the disasters which ruined their affairs in Canada. But this censure was unjust. He took command of the army when it was too weak to maintain its ground, and when the time for saving the sick and the military stores had passed away.

The siege of Quebec, instead of being continued longer, ought to have been abandoned at an earlier period. This was the real fault of those who commanded in Canada. It is to be ascribed to the reluctance always felt by inexperienced officers to disappoint the public expectation, by relinquishing an enterprise concerning which sanguine hopes have been entertained; and to encounter the obloquy of giving up a post, although it can no longer with prudence be defended. In the perseverance with which the siege of Quebec was maintained, these motives operated with all their force, and they received an addition, from the unwillingness felt by the Americans, to abandon those of their friends who had taken so decisive a part in their favour, as to be incapable of remaining in safety behind them.

June 4.

After the death of General Thomas reinforcements assembled at the mouth of the Sorel, which increased the army to four or five thousand men, who were commanded by General Sullivan. The friendly Canadians who had supposed themselves abandoned, manifested great joy at the arrival of a force which appeared to them very considerable; and offered every assistance in their power. Sullivan calculated on their joining him in great numbers, and entertained sanguine hopes of recovering and maintaining the post of De Chambeau.

Sherburne approached without having received any information that Butterfield had surrendered. Within about four miles of the Cedars, he was attacked by a considerable body of Indians; and, after a sharp conflict, surrendered at discretion.

On being informed of these untoward events, Arnold, at the head of seven hundred men, marched against the enemy then at Vaudreuil, in the hope of recovering the American prisoners. When preparing for an engagement, he received a flag, accompanied by Major Sherburne, giving him the most positive assurance that if he persisted in his design, it would be entirely out of the power of Captain Forster to prevent his savages from pursuing their horrid customs, and disencumbering themselves of their prisoners by putting every man to death. This massacre was already threatened; and Major Sherburne confirmed the information. Under the influence of this threat, Arnold desisted from his purpose, and consented to a cartel, by which the prisoners were delivered up to him; he agreeing, among other things, not only to deliver as many British soldiers in exchange for them, but also, that they should immediately return to their homes.

As a previous measure, it was necessary to dislodge the enemy at the Three Rivers.

Carleton was not immediately in a situation to follow up the blow given the Americans at Quebec, and to drive them entirely out of the province; but the respite allowed them was not of long duration.

Towards the end of May large reinforcements arrived, which augmented the British army in Canada to about thirteen thousand men. The general rendezvous appointed for these troops was at the Three Rivers. The army was greatly divided. A considerable corps, commanded by General Frazer, had reached the Three Rivers, and the main body was on its way from Quebec. The distance from the Sorel was about fifty miles, and several armed vessels and transports, full of troops, lay about five miles higher up than the Three Rivers, full in the way.[1]

General Thompson, who commanded the army after the illness of General Thomas, understanding the party at the Three Rivers to consist of about eight hundred men, partly Canadians, had detached Colonel St. Clair with between six and seven hundred men, to attack it, if there should be any probability of doing so with advantage. Colonel St. Clair advanced to Nicolet, where, believing himself not strong enough for the service on which he had been ordered, he waited for further reinforcements, or additional instructions. At this time General Sullivan arrived; and, understanding the enemy to be weak at the Three Rivers ordered Gen. Thompson to join Colonel St. Clair at Nicolet, with a reinforcement of nearly fourteen hundred men, to take command of the whole detachment, and to attack the troops lying at the Three Rivers, provided there was a favourable prospect of success.

General Thompson joined Colonel St. Clair at Nicolet, and, believing himself strong enough to perform the service consigned to him, fell down the river by night, and passed to the other side, with the intention of surprising Frazer. The plan was to attack the village a little before daybreak, at the same instant, at each end; whilst two smaller corps were drawn up to cover and support the attack.

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[1] Annual Register.

The troops passed the armed vessels without being perceived, but arrived at Three Rivers about an hour later than had been intended; in consequence of which they were discovered, and the alarm was given at their landing. To avoid the fire of some ships in the river, they attempted to pass through what appeared to be a point of woods, but was in reality a deep morass three miles in extent. The delays occasioned by their detention in this morass, gave General Frazer full time to land some field pieces, and prepare for their reception; while General Nesbit fell into their rear, and cut off their return to the boats. They advanced to the charge, but were soon repulsed; and finding it impracticable to return the way they came, were driven some miles through a deep swamp, which they traversed with inconceivable toil, and every degree of distress. The British at length gave over the pursuit.

In this unfortunate enterprise, General Thompson and Colonel Irwin, with about two hundred men, were made prisoners; and from twenty to thirty were killed. The loss of the British was inconsiderable.

The whole American force in Canada now amounted to about eight thousand men, not one half of whom were fit for duty. About two thousand five hundred effectives were with General Sullivan at the Sorel. The whole were in a state of total insubordination—much harassed with fatigue—and dispirited by their late losses, by the visible superiority of the enemy, and by the apprehension that their retreat would be entirely cut off. Under all these discouraging circumstances, General Sullivan formed the rash determination of defending the post at Sorel; and was induced only by the unanimous opinion of his officers, and a conviction that the troops would
June 14. not support him, to abandon it a few hours before the British took possession of it. The same causes drew him reluctantly from Chamblée and St. John's; but he
June 18. resolved to remain at the Isle Aux Noix, until he should receive orders to retreat. He had been joined at St. John's by General Arnold, who had crossed over at Longueisle just in time to save the garrison of Montreal.

The Isle Aux Noix is a low unhealthy place, badly supplied with water; where the troops were so universally seized with fevers, as to compel General Sullivan to retire to the Isle Lamotte. At that place he received the orders of General Schuyler to embark on the lakes for Crown Point.

The armed vessels on the Sorel and St. Lawrence were destroyed, and the fortifications of Chamblée and St. John's set on fire. All the baggage of the army, and nearly all the military stores were saved.

The British army, during the whole retreat, followed close in the rear, and took possession of the different posts which the Americans had occupied, immediately after they were evacuated.

On the Sorel the pursuit stopped. The Americans had the command of the lake, and the British general deemed it prudent to wrest it from them before he advanced farther. To effect this, it was necessary to construct a number of vessels, which required time and labour. Meanwhile, General Gates was ordered to take command of the northern army, which was directed to be reinforced with six thousand militia.

Thus terminated the enterprise against Canada. It was a bold, and at one period, promised to be a successful effort to annex that extensive province to the United Colonies. The dispositions of the Canadians favoured the measure; and had Quebec fallen, there is reason to believe the colony would have entered cordially into the union. Had a few incidents turned out fortunately; had Arnold been able to reach Quebec a few days sooner, or to cross the St. Lawrence on his first arrival—or had the gallant Montgomery not fallen in the assault of the 31st December, it is probable the expedition would have been crowned with complete success. But the radical causes of failure, putting fortune out of the question, were to be found in the lateness of the season when the troops were assembled, in a defect of the preparations necessary for such a service, and still more in the shortness of the time for which the men were enlisted. Had the expedition been successful, the practicability of maintaining the country is much to be doubted. Whilst General Montgomery lay before Quebec, and expected to obtain possession of the place, he extended his views to its preservation. His plan required a permanent army of ten thousand men; strong fortifications at Jacques Cartier, and the rapids of Richelieu; and armed vessels in the river, above the last place. With this army and these precautions, he thought the country might be defended; but not with an inferior force.

It seems, therefore, to have been an enterprise requiring means beyond the ability of Congress; and the strength exhausted on it would have been more judiciously employed in securing the command of the lakes George and Champlain, and the fortified towns upon them.

While General Carleton was making preparations to enter the lakes, General Schuyler was using his utmost exertions to retain the command of them. But, so great was the difficulty of procuring workmen and materials, that he found it impossible to equip a fleet which would be equal to the exigency. It consisted of only fifteen small vessels; the largest of which was a schooner mounting twelve guns, carrying six and four pound balls. The command of this squadron, at the instance of General Washington, was given to General Arnold.

October.

With almost incredible exertions, the British General constructed a powerful fleet; and, afterwards, dragged up the rapids of St. Therese and St. John's, a vast number of long boats and other vessels, among which was a gondola weighing thirty tons. This immense work was completed in little more than three months; and, as if by magic, General Arnold saw on Lake Champlain, early in October, a fleet consisting of near thirty vessels; the largest of which, the Inflexible, carried eighteen twelve-pounders. This formidable fleet, having on board General Carleton himself, and navigated by seven hundred prime seamen under the command of Captain Pringle, proceeded immediately in quest of Arnold, who was advantageously posted between the island of Valicour and the western main.

Notwithstanding the disparity of force, a warm action ensued. A wind, unfavourable to the British, kept the Inflexible and some other large vessels at too great a distance to render any service. This circumstance enabled Arnold to keep up the engagement until night, when Captain Pringle discontinued it, and anchored his whole fleet in a line, as near the vessels of his adversary as was practicable. In this engagement, the best schooner belonging to the American flotilla was burnt, and a gondola was sunk.

In the night, Arnold attempted to escape to Ticonderoga; and, the next morning, was out of sight; but, being immediately pursued, was overtaken about noon, and brought to action a few leagues short of Crown Point. He kept up a warm engagement for about two hours, during which the vessels that were most ahead escaped to Ticonderoga. Two gallies and five gondolas, which remained, made a desperate resistance. At length one of them struck; after which Arnold ran the remaining vessels on shore, and blew them up; having first saved his men, though great efforts were made to take them.

On the approach of the British army, a small detachment, which had occupied Crown Point as an out-post, evacuated the place, and retired to Ticonderoga, which Schuyler determined to defend to the last extremity.

General Carleton took possession of Crown Point, and advanced a part of his fleet into Lake George, within view of Ticonderoga. His army also approached that place, as if designing to invest it; but, after reconnoitring the works, and observing the steady countenance of the garrison, he thought it too late to lay siege to the fortress. Re-embarking his army, he returned to Canada, where he placed it in winter quarters; making the Isle Aux Noix his most advanced post.

CHAPTER IV

WHILST the war was carried on thus vigorously in the north, the southern colonies were not entirely unemployed. 1775. July. The convention of Virginia determined to raise two regiments of regular troops for one year, and to enlist a part of the militia as minute-men.

Lord Dunmore, the Governor of the colony, who was joined by the most active of the disaffected, and by a number of slaves whom he had encouraged to run away from their masters, was collecting a naval force, which threatened to be extremely troublesome in a country so intersected with large navigable rivers as the colony of Virginia. With this force he carried on a slight predatory war, and, at length, attempted to burn the town of Hampton. The inhabitants, having received intimation of his design, gave notice of it to the commanding officer at Williamsburg, where some regulars and minute-men were stationed. Two companies were despatched to their assistance, who arrived just before the assault was made, and obliged the assailants to retreat, with some loss, to their vessels.

In consequence of this repulse, his Lordship proclaimed martial law; Nov. 7. summoned all persons capable of bearing arms to repair to the royal standard, or be considered as traitors; and offered freedom to all indented servants and slaves who should join him.[1]

This proclamation made some impression about Norfolk, where the Governor collected such a force of the disaffected and negroes, as gave him an entire ascendancy in that part of the colony.

Intelligence of these transactions being received at Williamsburg, a regiment of regulars and about two hundred minute-men, were ordered down under the command of Colonel Woodford,[1] for the defence of the inhabitants. Hearing of their approach, Lord Dunmore took a well chosen position on the north side of Elizabeth river, at the Great Bridge, where it was necessary for the provincials to cross in order to reach Norfolk; at which place he had established himself in some force. Here he erected a small fort on a piece of firm ground surrounded by a marsh, which was accessible, on either side, only by a long causeway. Colonel Woodford encamped within cannon-shot of this post, in a small village at the south end of the causeway; across which, just at its termination, he constructed a breast-work; but, being without artillery, was unable to make any attempt on the fort.

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[1] Gazette—Remembrancer.

In this position both parties continued for a few days, when Lord Dunmore ordered Captain Fordyce, the commanding officer at the Great Bridge, though inferior in numbers, to storm the works of the provincials. Between day-break and sunrise, this officer, at the head of about sixty grenadiers of the 14th regiment, who led the column, advanced along the causeway with fixed bayonets, against the breast-work. The alarm was immediately given; and, as is the practice with raw troops, the bravest rushed to the works, where, regardless of order, they kept up a heavy fire on the front of the British column. Captain Fordyce, though received so warmly in front, and taken in flank by a party posted on a small eminence on his right, marched up with great intrepidity, until he fell dead within a few steps of the breast-work. The column immediately broke and retreated; but being covered by the artillery of the fort, was not pursued.

Dec. 9.

In this ill-judged attack, every grenadier is said to have been killed or wounded; while the Americans did not lose a single man.

The following night, the fort was evacuated. The provincial troops proceeded to Norfolk, under the command of Colonel Howe of North Carolina, and Lord Dunmore took refuge on board his vessels.

After taking possession of the town, the American soldiers frequently amused themselves by firing into the vessels in the

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[1] The author was in this expedition, and relates the circumstances attending it chiefly from his own observation.

1776. January. harbour, from the buildings near the water. Irritated by this, Lord Dunmore determined to destroy the houses immediately on the shore; and, on the night of the first of January, under cover of a heavy cannonade, landed a body of troops, and set fire to a number of houses near the river. The provincials, who entertained strong prejudices against this station, saw the flames spread from house to house without making any attempt to extinguish them. After the fire had continued several weeks, in which time it had consumed about four-fifths of the town, Colonel Howe, who had waited on the convention to urge the necessity of destroying the place, returned February. with orders to burn the remaining houses; which were carried into immediate execution.

Thus was destroyed the most populous and flourishing town in Virginia. Its destruction was one of those ill-judged measures, of which the consequences are felt long after the motives are forgotten.

After Norfolk was laid in ashes, Lord Dunmore continued a predatory war on the rivers—burning houses, and robbing plantations—which served only to distress a few individuals, and to increase the detestation in which he was held through the country. At length, his wretched followers, wearied with their miserable condition, were sent to Florida.[1]

As the war became more serious, the convention deemed it necessary to increase the number of regular regiments from two to nine, which were afterwards taken into the continental service.

In North Carolina, Governor Martin, though obliged to take refuge on board a ship of war, in Cape Fear river, indulged the hope of being able to reduce that colony.

A body of ignorant and disorderly men on the western frontier, styling themselves regulators, had attempted by arms, some time before the existing war, to control and stop the administration of justice. After failing in this attempt, they became as hostile to the colonial, as they had been to the royal government.

The province also contained many families who had lately emigrated from the highlands of Scotland; and who, retaining their attachment to the place of their nativity, transferred it to the government under which they had been bred. From the union of these parties, Governor Martin entertained sanguine hopes of making a successful struggle for North Carolina. His confidence was increased by the assurances he had received, that a considerable land and naval armament was destined for the southern colonies.

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[1] Virginia Gazette.

To prepare for co-operating with this force, should it arrive; or, in any event, to make an effort to give the ascendancy in North Carolina to the royal cause, he sent several commissions to the leaders of the highlanders, for raising and commanding regiments; and granted one to a Mr. M'Donald, their chief, to act as their general. He also sent them a proclamation, to be used on a proper occasion, commanding all persons, on their allegiance, to repair to the royal standard. This was erected by General M'Donald at Cross Creek, about the middle of February, and nearly fifteen hundred men arranged themselves under it.

Upon the first advice that the loyalists were assembling, Brigadier General Moore marched at the head of a provincial regiment, with such militia as he could suddenly collect, and some pieces of cannon, and took a strong position within a few miles of them. Feb. 15. General M'Donald soon approached, and sent a letter to Moore, enclosing the Governor's proclamation, and recommending to him Feb. 20. and his party to join the King's standard by a given hour the next day. The negotiation was protracted by Moore, in the hope that the numerous bodies of militia who were advancing to join him, would soon enable him to surround his adversary. M'Donald, at length, perceived his danger, and, suddenly decamping, endeavoured by forced marches to extricate himself from it, and join Governor Martin and Lord William Campbell, who were encouraged to commence active operations by the arrival of General Clinton in the colony.

The provincial parties, however, were so alert in every part of the country, that he found himself under the necessity of engaging Colonels Caswell and Lillington, who, with about one thousand minute-men and militia, had entrenched themselves directly in his front, at a place called Moore's Creek Bridge. The royalists were greatly superior in number, but were under the disadvantage of being compelled to cross the bridge, the planks of which were partly taken up, in the face of the intrenchments occupied by the provincials. They commenced the attack however with great spirit; but Colonel M‘Leod who commanded them, in consequence of the indisposition of M‘Donald, and several others of their bravest officers and men, having fallen in the first onset, their courage deserted them, and they fled in great disorder, leaving behind them their general and several others of their leaders, who fell into the hands of the provincials.[1]

This victory was of eminent service to the American cause in North Carolina. It broke the spirits of a great body of men, who would have constituted a formidable reinforcement to an invading army; increased the confidence of the provincials in themselves, and attached to them the timid and wavering, who form a large portion of every community.

General Clinton, who was to command in the south, had left Boston with a force too inconsiderable to attempt any thing until he should be reinforced by the troops expected from Europe. After parting with Governor Tryon in New York, he had proceeded to Virginia, where he passed a few days with Lord Dunmore; but finding himself too weak to effect any thing in that province, he repaired to North Carolina, and remained with Governor Martin until the arrival of Sir Peter Parker. Fortunately for the province, the unsuccessful insurrection of M‘Donald had previously broken the strength and spirits of the loyalists, and deprived them of their most active chiefs;
May. in consequence of which, the operations which had been meditated against North Carolina were deferred. Clinton continued in Cape Fear until near the end of May, when, hearing nothing certain from General Howe, he determined to make an attempt on the capital of South Carolina.

Early in the month of April, a letter from the secretary of state to Mr. Eden, the royal governor of Maryland, disclosing the designs of administration against the southern colonies, was intercepted in the Chesapeake; and thus, South Carolina became apprized of the danger which threatened its metropolis. Mr. Rutledge, a gentleman of vigour and talents, who had been chosen president of that province on the dissolution of the regal government, adopted the most energetic means for placing it in a posture of defence.

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[1] Annual Register—Gordon—Ramsay—Gazette.

In the beginning of June, the British fleet came to anchor off the harbour of Charleston. The bar was crossed with some difficulty; after which, it was determined to commence operations by silencing a fort on Sullivan's island.

June 10.

During the interval between passing the bar and attacking the fort, the continental troops of Virginia and North Carolina arrived in Charleston; and the American force amounted to between five and six thousand men, of whom two thousand five hundred were regulars. This army was commanded by General Lee, whose fortune it had been to meet General Clinton at New York, in Virginia, and in North Carolina. Viewing with a military eye the situation of the post entrusted to his care, Lee was disinclined to hazard his army by engaging it deeply in the defence of the town; but the solicitude of the South Carolinians to preserve their capital, aided by his confidence in his own vigilance, prevailed over a caution which was thought extreme, and determined him to attempt to maintain the place.

Two regular regiments of South Carolina, commanded by Colonels Gadsden and Moultrie, garrisoned fort Johnson and fort Moultrie. About five hundred regulars, and three hundred militia under Colonel Thompson, were stationed in some works which had been thrown up on the north-eastern extremity of Sullivan's island; and the remaining troops were arranged on Hadrell's Point, and along the bay in front of the town. General Lee remained in person with the troops at Hadrell's Point, in the rear of Sullivan's island. His position was chosen in such a manner as to enable him to observe and support the operations in every quarter, and especially to watch and oppose any attempt of the enemy to pass from Long Island to the continent; a movement of which he seems to have been particularly apprehensive.

The British ships, after taking their stations, commenced an incessant and heavy cannonade on the American works. Its effect, however, on the fort, was not such as had been expected. This was attributable to its form, and to its materials. It was very low, with merlons of great thickness; and was constructed of earth, and a species of soft wood common in that country, called the palmetto, which, on being struck with a ball, does not splinter, but closes upon it.

The fire from the fort was deliberate; and, being directed with skill, did vast execution. The garrison united the cool determined courage of veterans, with the enthusiastic ardour of youth. General Lee crossed over in a boat, to determine whether he should withdraw them; and was enraptured by the ardour they displayed. They assured him they would lose the fort only with their lives; and the mortally wounded breathed their last, exhorting their fellow soldiers to the most heroic defence of the place.

The engagement continued until night. By that time, the ships were in such a condition, as to be unfit to renew the action on the ensuing day. The Bristol lost one hundred and eleven men, and the Experiment seventy-nine. Captain Scott, of the one, lost his arm; and Captain Morris, of the other, was mortally wounded. Lord Campbell, late Governor of the province, who served as a volunteer on board one of these vessels, was also mortally wounded; and both ships were so shattered, as to inspire hopes that they would be unable to repass the bar. About nine, they slipped their cables and moved off. A few days afterwards, the troops were re-embarked, and all farther designs against the southern colonies being for the present relinquished, the squadron sailed for New York.[1] July 15.

The attack on fort Moultrie was supported by the British seamen with their accustomed bravery; and the slaughter on board the ships was uncommonly great. The loss of the Americans, in killed and wounded, was only thirty-five men.

Great and well merited praise was bestowed on Colonel Moultrie, who commanded the fort, and on the garrison, for the resolution displayed in defending it. Nor was the glory acquired on this occasion confined to them. All the troops that had been stationed on the island partook of it: and the thanks of the United Colonies were voted by congress to General Lee,

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[1] Annual Register—Gordon—Ramsay—Letters of General Lee.

Colonel Moultrie, Colonel Thompson, and the officers and men under their command.

This fortunate event, for such it may well be termed, though not of much magnitude in itself, was, like many other successes attending the American arms in the commencement of the war, of great importance in its consequences. By impressing on the colonists a conviction of their ability to maintain the contest, it increased the number of those who resolved to resist British authority, and assisted in paving the way to a declaration of independence.

Even before the evacuation of Boston, it had been foreseen that New York must become the seat of war; and that most important military operations would be carried on in that colony. The fortifications which had been commenced for the defence of its capital were indefatigably prosecuted; and, after the arrival of General Washington, these works, combined with those to be erected in the passes through the highlands up the Hudson, were the objects of his unremitting attention.

The difficulty which had been experienced in expelling the British from Boston, had demonstrated the importance of preventing their establishment in New York; and had contributed to the determination of contesting with them, very seriously, the possession of that important place. The execution of this determination, however, was difficult and dangerous. The defence of New York, against an enemy commanding the sea, requires an army capable of meeting him in the open field, and of acting offensively both on Long and York Islands. Congress had not adopted measures which might raise such an army. The Commander-in-chief, in his letters to that body, had long and earnestly urged the policy of bringing the whole strength of the country into regular operation. The government was not inattentive to his remonstrances; but many circumstances combined to prevent such a military establishment as the exigency required.

The congress which assembled in 1775, had adjourned with strong hopes that the differences between the Mother Country and the Colonies would soon be adjusted to their mutual satisfaction. When the temper manifested both by the king and his parliament had dissipated these hopes, and the immense preparations of Great Britain for war, evinced the necessity of preparations equally vigorous on the part of America, the resolution to make them was finally taken. But, unaccustomed to the great duties of conducting a war of vast extent, they could not estimate rightly the value of the means employed, nor calculate the effects which certain causes would produce. Opinions of the most pernicious tendency prevailed; from which they receded slowly, and from which they could be ultimately forced only by melancholy experience.

The most fatal among these was the theory, that an army could be created every campaign for the purposes of that campaign; and that such temporary means would be adequate to the defence of the country. They relied confidently on being able on any emergency, to call out a force suited to the occasion:—they relied too much on the competence of such a force to the purposes of war, and they depended too long on the spirit of patriotism, which was believed to animate the mass of the people.

Under these impressions, the determination to form a permanent army was too long delayed; and the measures necessary to raise such an army were deferred, till their efficacy became doubtful. It was not until June, 1776, that the representations of the Commander-in-chief could obtain a resolution, directing soldiers to be enlisted for three years, and offering a bounty of ten dollars to each recruit. The time when this resolution could certainly have been executed, had passed away. That zeal for the service, which was manifested in the first moments of the war, had long since begun to abate; and though the determination to resist had become more general, that enthusiasm which prompts individuals to expose themselves to more than an equal share of danger and hardship, was visibly declining. The progress of these sentiments seems to have been unexpected; and the causes producing such effects appear not to have been perceived. The regiments voted by congress were incomplete; and that bounty, which, if offered in time, would have effected its object, came too late to fill them.

It was not in numbers only that the weakness of the American army consisted. In arms, ammunition, tents, and clothes, its deficiency was such as to render it unfit for the great purposes of war, and inferior, in all these respects, to the enemy which it was destined to encounter.

But, however inadequate to the object the regular force might be, both the government and the Commander-in-chief were determined to defend New York; and congress passed a resolution to reinforce the army with thirteen thousand eight hundred militia. For the defence of the middle colonies, and for the purpose of repelling any attempt to land on the Jersey shore, it was resolved to form a flying camp, to be composed of ten thousand men, to be furnished by Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. The militia, both of the flying camp and of the army at New York, were to be engaged to serve until the first of December; and the Commander-in-chief was empowered to call on the neighbouring colonies for such additional temporary aids of militia, as the exigencies of his army might render necessary.

Great and embarrassing as were the difficulties already noticed, they were augmented by the disaffection of the city of New York, and of the adjacent islands. Although Governor Tryon had found it necessary to take refuge on board some ships lying in the harbour, he had been permitted to continue an open intercourse with the inhabitants, which enabled him to communicate freely with the royalists; and to concert plans of future co-operation. This intercourse was broken off by the arrival of the Commander-in-chief;—yet a plot was formed, through the agency of the mayor, to rise in favour of the British on their landing; and, as was understood, to seize and deliver up General Washington himself. This plot had extended to the American army, and even to the general's guards. It was fortunately discovered in time to be defeated; and some of the persons concerned were executed. About the same time a similar plot was discovered in the neighbourhood of Albany; and there too, executions were found necessary.

Hitherto, the sole avowed object of the war had been a redress of grievances. The utmost horror had been expressed at the idea of attempting independence; and the most anxious desire of re-establishing the union which had so long subsisted between the two countries on its ancient principles, was openly and generally declared. But however sincere these declarations might have been at the commencement of the conflict, the operation of hostilities was infallible. To profess allegiance and respect for a monarch with whom they were at open war, was an absurdity too great to be long continued. The human mind, when it receives a strong impulse, does not, like projectiles, stop at the point to which the force originally applied may have been calculated to carry it. Various causes act upon it in its course. When the appeal was made to arms, a great majority of those who guided the councils and led the forces of America, wished only for a repeal of the acts of parliament which had occasioned their resistance to the authority of the crown; and would have been truly unwilling to venture upon the unexplored field of self-government. For some time, prayers were offered for the king, in the performance of divine service; and, in the proclamation of a fast by congress, in June, 1775, one of the motives for recommending it, was, to beseech the Almighty "to bless our rightful sovereign King George III. and inspire him with wisdom."

The prejudices in favour of a connexion with England, and of the English constitution, gradually, but rapidly yielded to republican principles, and a desire for independence. New strength was every day added to the opinions, that a cordial reconciliation with Great Britain had become impossible; that mutual confidence could never be restored; that reciprocal jealousy, suspicion, and hate, would take the place of that affection, which could alone render such a connexion happy and beneficial; that even the commercial dependence of America upon Britain, was greatly injurious to the former, and that incalcuable benefits must be derived from opening to themselves the markets of the world; that to be governed by a distant nation or sovereign, unacquainted with, and unmindful of their interests, would, even if reinstated in their former situation, be an evil too great to be voluntarily borne. But victory alone could restore them to that situation—and victory would give them independence. The hazard was the same; and since the risk of every thing was unavoidable, the most valuable object ought, in common justice, and common prudence, to be the reward of success. With such horror, too, did they view the present war, as to suppose it could not possibly receive the support of a free people. The alacrity therefore with which the English nation entered into it, was ascribed to a secret and dangerous influence, which was, with rapid progress, undermining the liberties and the morals of the mother country; and which, it was feared, would cross the Atlantic, and infect the principles of the colonists likewise, should the ancient connexion be restored. The intercourse of America with the world, and her own experience, had not then been sufficient to teach her the important truth, that the many, as often as the few, can abuse power, and trample on the weak, without perceiving that they are tyrants; that they too, not unfrequently, close their eyes against the light; and shut their ears against the plainest evidence, and the most conclusive reasoning.

It was also urged, with great effect, that the possibility of obtaining foreign aid would be much increased by holding out the dismemberment of the British empire, to the rivals of that nation, as an inducement to engage in the contest.

American independence became the general theme of conversation; and more and more the general wish. The measures of congress took their complexion from the temper of the people. Their proceedings against the disaffected became more and more vigorous; their language respecting the British government was less the language of subjects, and better calculated to turn the public attention towards congress and the provincial assemblies, as the sole and ultimate rulers of the country. General letters of marque and reprisal were granted; and the American ports were opened to all nations and people, not subject to the British crown.

May 6.

At length, a measure was adopted, which was considered by congress and by America in general, as deciding the question of independence. Hitherto, it had been recommended to particular colonies, to establish temporary institutions for the conduct of their affairs during the existence of the contest; but now, a resolution was offered, recommending generally to such colonies as had not already established them, the adoption of governments adequate to the exigency. Mr. John Adams, Mr. Rutledge, and Mr. Richard Henry Lee, all zealous advocates for independence, were appointed a committee, May 15. to prepare a proper preamble to the resolution. The report of these gentlemen was accepted, and the resolution passed.[1]

The provincial assemblies and conventions acted on this recommendation; and governments were generally established. In Connecticut and Rhode Island, it was deemed unnecessary to make any change in their actual situation, because, in those colonies, the executive, as well as the whole legislature, had always been elected by themselves. In Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York, some hesitation was at first discovered; and the assemblies appeared unwilling to take this decisive step. The public opinion, however, was in favour of it, and finally prevailed.

The several colonies, now contemplating themselves as sovereign states, and mingling with the arduous duty of providing means to repel a powerful enemy, the important and interesting labour of framing governments for themselves and their posterity, exhibited the novel spectacle of matured and enlightened societies, uninfluenced by external or internal force, devising, according to their own judgments, political systems for their own government.

With the exceptions already stated, of Connecticut and Rhode Island, whose systems had ever been in a high degree democratic, the hitherto untried principle was adopted, of limiting the departments of government by a written constitution, prescribing bounds not to be transcended by the legislature itself.

The solid foundations of a popular government were already laid in all the colonies. The institutions received from England were admirably calculated to prepare the way for temperate and rational republics. No hereditary powers had ever existed; and every authority had been derived either from the people or the king. The crown being no longer acknowledged, the people remained the only source of legitimate power. The materials in their possession, as well as their habits of thinking, were adapted only to governments in all respects representative; and such governments were universally adopted.

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[1] Before the vote on the question of independence was taken, congress passed resolutions, declaring that all persons residing within, or passing through any one of the United Colonies, owed allegiance to the government thereof; and that any such person who should levy war against any of the United Colonies, or adhere to the king of Great Britain, or other enemies of the said colonies, or any of them, should be guilty of treason: and recommending it to the several legislatures to pass laws for their punishment.

The provincial assemblies, under the influence of congress, took up the question of independence; and, in some instances, authorized their representatives in the great national council, to enter into foreign alliances. Many declared themselves in favour of a total and immediate separation from Great Britain; and gave instructions to their representatives conforming to this sentiment.

Thus supported by public opinion, congress determined to take this decisive step; and on the 7th of June, a resolution to that effect was moved by Richard Henry Lee, and seconded by John Adams. The resolution was referred to a committee, who reported it in the following terms. "Resolved, that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states; and that all political connexion between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."

June 7.

This resolution was referred to a committee of the whole, in which it was debated on Saturday the 8th, and Monday the 10th of June. It appearing that New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and South Carolina were not yet matured for the measure, but were fast advancing to that state, the debate was adjourned to the first of July, when it was resumed. In the mean time, a committee[1] was appointed to prepare the declaration of independence, which was reported on the 28th of June, and laid on the table. On the first of July the debate on the original resolution was resumed. The question was put in the evening of that day, and carried in the affirmative by the votes of New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia, against Pennsylvania and South Carolina. Delaware was divided; and the delegates from New York, having declared their approbation of the resolution, and their conviction that it was approved by their constituents also, but that their instructions, which had been drawn near twelve months before, enjoined them to do nothing which might impede reconciliation with the mother country, were permitted to withdraw from the question. The report of the committee was put off till the next day at the request of Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina, who expressed the opinion that his colleagues would then concur in the resolution for the sake of unanimity. The next day South Carolina did concur in it. The votes of Pennsylvania and Delaware were also changed by the arrival of other members. Congress then proceeded to consider the declaration of independence. After some amendments[1] it was approved, and signed by every member present except Mr. Dickenson.[2]

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[1] Mr. Jefferson, Mr. John Adams, Mr. Franklin, and Mr. R. R. Livingston. Mr. R. H. Lee, the mover of the resolution, had been compelled by the illness of Mrs. Lee to leave congress the day on which the committee was appointed.

This declaration was immediately communicated to the armies who received it with enthusiasm. It was also proclaimed throughout the United States, and was generally approved by those who had engaged in the opposition to the claims of the British Parliament. Some few individuals, who had been zealous supporters of all measures which had for their object only a redress of grievances, and in whose bosoms the hope of accommodation still lingered,—either too timid to meet the arduous conflict which this measure rendered inevitable, or, sincerely believing that the happiness of America would be best consulted by preserving their political connexion with Great Britain, viewed the dissolution of that connexion with regret. Others, who afterwards deserted the American cause, attributed their defection to this measure. It was also an unfortunate truth, that in the whole country between New England and the Potowmac, which was now become the great theatre of action, although the majority was in favour of independence, a formidable minority existed, who not only refused to act with their countrymen, but were ready to give to the enemy every aid in their power.

It can not, however, be questioned, that the declaration of independence was wise, and well-timed. The soundest policy required that the war should no longer be a contest between subjects and their acknowledged sovereign.

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[1] See Appendix, Note No. VI.

[2] Mr. Jefferson's Correspondence, v. i. p. 14.

CHAPTER V

WHILE congress was deliberating in Philadelphia on the great question of independence, the British fleet appeared before New York.

On evacuating Boston, General Howe had retired to Halifax; where he purposed to remain till reinforcements should arrive from England. But the situation of his army in that place was so uncomfortable, and the delays in the arrival of the troops from Europe were so great, that he at length resolved to sail for New York, with the forces already under his command.

In the latter end of June, he arrived off Sandy Hook, in the Grey Hound; and, on the 29th of that month, the first division of the fleet from Halifax reached that place. The rear division soon followed; and the troops were landed on Staten Island, on the third and fourth of July. They were received with great demonstrations of joy by the inhabitants, who took the oaths of allegiance to the British crown, and embodied themselves under the authority of the late Governor Tryon, for the defence of the island. Strong assurances were also received from Long Island, and the neighbouring parts of New Jersey, of the favourable dispositions of a great proportion of the people to the royal cause.

It was foreseen that the provisions remaining on the small islands about New York, must fall into the possession of the invading army, and General Washington had intended to remove them to a place of safety; but, the existing state of public opinion requiring the co-operation of the several committees, this measure of wise precaution could not be completely executed; and General Howe, on his arrival, obtained ample supplies for his army.

The command of the fleet destined for the American service was intrusted to Lord Howe, the brother of the general; and they were both constituted commissioners for restoring peace to the colonies, and granting pardons, with such exceptions as they should think proper to make. He arrived at Staten Island on the twelfth of July.

The difficulty of closing the Hudson against an enemy possessing a powerful fleet was soon demonstrated. Two frigates passed the batteries without injury, and took a station which enabled them to cut off the communication by water, between the army at New York, and that at Ticonderoga. An attempt to set these frigates on fire failed in its execution, and only a tender was burnt;—soon after which these vessels returned to the fleet.

July 14. Lord Howe was not deterred by the declaration of Independence from trying the influence of his powers for pacification. He sent on shore, by a flag, a circular letter, dated off the coast of Massachusetts, addressed severally to the late governors under the crown, enclosing a declaration, which he requested them to make public. This declaration announced his authority to grant pardons to any number or description of persons, who, during the tumult and disorders of the times, might have deviated from their just allegiance, and who might be willing, by a speedy return to their duty, to reap the benefits of the royal favour; and to declare any colony, town, port, or place, in the peace and under the protection of the crown, and excepted from the penal provisions of the act of parliament prohibiting all trade and intercourse with the colonies. Assurances were also given that the meritorious services of all persons who should aid and assist in restoring public tranquillity in the colonies, or in any parts thereof, would be duly considered.

July 19. These papers were immediately transmitted by the Commander-in-chief to congress, who resolved that they should "be published in the several gazettes, that the good people of the United States might be informed of what nature were the commissioners, and what the terms, with the expectation of which, the insidious court of Britain had sought to amuse and disarm them; and that the few who still remained suspended by a hope, founded either in the justice or moderation of their late king, might now, at length, be convinced, that the valour alone of their country is to save its liberties."

About the same time, Lord Howe sent, with a flag, a letter addressed to "George Washington, esquire," which the general refused to receive, as "it did not acknowledge the public character with which he was invested by congress, and in no other character could he have any intercourse with his lordship." In a resolution approving this proceeding, congress directed, "that no letter or message be received on any occasion whatever from the enemy, by the Commander-in-chief, or others, the commanders of the American army, but such as shall be directed to them in the characters they respectively sustain."

The commissioners felt some difficulty in recognising either the civil or military character conferred on individuals by the existing powers in America; and yet it was desirable, either for the purpose of effecting a pacification, or, if that should be impracticable, of increasing the divisions already existing, to open negotiations, and hold out the semblance of restoring peace. They cast about for means to evade this preliminary obstacle to any discussion of the terms they were authorized to propose; and, at length, Colonel Patterson, adjutant general of the British army, was sent on shore by General Howe, with a letter directed to George Washington, &c. &c. &c. He was introduced to the general, whom he addressed by the title of "Excellency;" and, after the usual compliments, opened the subject of his mission, by saying, that General Howe much regretted the difficulties which had arisen respecting the address of the letters; that the mode adopted was deemed consistent with propriety, and was founded on precedent, in cases of ambassadors and plenipotentiaries, where disputes or difficulties had arisen about rank; that General Washington might recollect he had, last summer, addressed a letter to "the honourable William Howe;" that Lord, and General Howe, did not mean to derogate from his rank, or the respect due to him, and that they held his person and character in the highest esteem;—but that the direction, with the addition of &c. &c. &c. implied every thing which ought to follow. Colonel Patterson then produced a letter which he said was the same that had been sent, and which he laid on the table.

July 20.

The general declined receiving it, and said, that a letter directed to a person in a public character, should have some description or indication of that character; otherwise it would be considered as a mere private letter. It was true the *etceteras* implied every thing, and they also implied any thing; that the letter to General Howe, alluded to, was an answer to one received from him under a like address; which, having been taken by the officer on duty, he did not think proper to return, and therefore answered in the same mode of address; and that he should absolutely decline any letter relating to his public station, directed to him as a private person.

Colonel Patterson then said, that General Howe would not urge his delicacy farther, and repeated his assertions that no failure of respect was intended.

After some conversation relative to the treatment of prisoners, Colonel Patterson said, that the goodness and benevolence of the king had induced him to appoint Lord Howe, and General Howe, his commissioners to accommodate the unhappy dispute at present subsisting: that they had great powers, and would derive much pleasure from effecting the accommodation; and that he wished this visit to be considered as the first advance towards so desirable an object.

General Washington replied, that he was not vested with any powers on this subject; but he would observe that, so far as he could judge from what had yet transpired, Lord Howe and General Howe were only empowered to grant pardons; that those who had committed no fault, wanted no pardon; and that the Americans were only defending what they deemed their indubitable rights. This, Colonel Patterson said, would open a very wide field for argument: and, after expressing his fears that an adherence to forms might obstruct business of the greatest moment and concern, he took his leave.

The substance of this conversation was communicated to congress, who directed its publication.

August.

The reinforcements to the British army, of whom about four hundred and fifty had been captured by the American cruisers, were now arriving daily from Europe; and General Howe had also been joined by the troops from Charleston. His strength was estimated at twenty-four thousand men.

To this army, alike formidable for its numbers, its discipline, and its equipments,—aided in its operations by a numerous fleet, and conducted by commanders of skill and experience, was opposed a force, unstable in its nature,—incapable, from its structure, of receiving discipline,—and inferior to its enemy, in numbers, in arms, and in every military equipment. It consisted, when General Howe landed on Staten Island, of ten thousand men, who were much enfeebled by sickness. The diseases which always afflict new troops, were increased by exposure to the rain and night air, without tents. At the instance of the General, some regiments, stationed in the different states, were ordered to join him; and, in addition to the requisitions of men to serve until December—requisitions not yet complied with—the neighbouring militia were called into service for the exigency of the moment. Yet, in a letter written to congress on the 8th of August, he stated that "for the several posts on New York, Long, and Governor's Island, and Paulus Hook, the army consisted of only seventeen thousand two hundred and twenty-five men, of whom three thousand six hundred and sixty-eight were sick; and that, to repel an immediate attack, he could count certainly on no other addition to his numbers, than a battalion from Maryland under the command of Colonel Smallwood." This force was rendered the more inadequate to its objects by being necessarily divided for the defence of posts, some of which were fifteen miles distant from others, with navigable waters between them.

"These things," continued the letter, "are melancholy, but they are nevertheless true. I hope for better. Under every disadvantage, my utmost exertions shall be employed to bring about the great end we have in view; and, so far as I can judge from the professions and apparent dispositions of my troops, I shall have their support. The superiority of the enemy, and the expected attack, do not seem to have depressed their spirits. These considerations lead me to think that though the appeal may not terminate so happily as I could wish, yet the enemy will not succeed in their views without considerable loss. Any advantage they may gain, I trust will cost them dear."

Soon after this letter, the army was reinforced by Smallwood's regiment, and by two regiments from Pennsylvania, with a body of New England and New York militia, which increased it to twenty-seven thousand men, of whom one fourth were sick.

A part of the army was stationed on Long Island, under the command of Major General Sullivan. The residue occupied different stations on York Island, except two small detachments, one on Governor's Island, and the other at Paulus Hook; and except a part of the New York militia under General Clinton, who were stationed on the Sound, towards New Rochelle, and about East and West Chester, in order to oppose any sudden attempt which might be made to land above Kingsbridge, and cut off the communication with the country.

Expecting daily to be attacked, and believing that the influence of the first battle would be considerable, the Commander-in-chief employed every expedient which might act upon that enthusiastic love of liberty, that indignation against the invaders of their country, and that native courage, which were believed to animate the bosoms of his soldiers; and which were relied on as substitutes for discipline and experience. Aug. 2. "The time," say his orders issued soon after the arrival of General Howe, "is now near at hand, which must determine whether Americans are to be freemen or slaves; whether they are to have any property they can call their own; whether their houses and farms are to be pillaged and destroyed, and themselves consigned to a state of wretchedness from which no human efforts will deliver them. The fate of unborn millions will now depend, under God, on the courage and conduct of this army. Our cruel and unrelenting enemy leaves us only the choice of a brave resistance, or the most abject submission. We have therefore to resolve to conquer or to die. Our own, our country's honour, call upon us for a vigorous and manly exertion; and if we now shamefully fail, we shall become infamous to the whole world. Let us then rely on the goodness of our cause, and the aid of the Supreme Being, in whose hands victory is, to animate and encourage us to great and noble actions. The eyes of all our countrymen are now upon us, and we shall have their blessings and praises, if happily we are the instruments of saving them from the tyranny meditated against them. Let us therefore animate and encourage each other, and show the whole world that a freeman contending for liberty, on his own ground, is superior to any slavish mercenary on earth."

To the officers, he recommended coolness in time of action;

and to the soldiers, strict attention and obedience, with a becoming firmness and spirit.

He assured them that any officer, soldier, or corps, distinguished by any acts of extraordinary bravery, should most certainly meet with notice and rewards; whilst, on the other hand, those who should fail in the performance of their duty, would as certainly be exposed and punished.

Whilst preparations were making for the expected engagement, intelligence was received of the repulse of the British squadron which had attacked fort Moultrie. The Commander-in-chief availed himself of the occasion of communicating this success to his army, to add a spirit of emulation to the other motives which should impel them to manly exertions. "This glorious example of our troops," he said, "under the like circumstances with ourselves, the General hopes, will animate every officer and soldier to imitate, and even to outdo them, when the enemy shall make the same attempt on us. With such a bright example before us of what can be done by brave men fighting in defence of their country, we shall be loaded with a double share of shame and infamy, if we do not acquit ourselves with courage, and manifest a determined resolution to conquer or die."

Aug. 21.

As the crisis approached, his anxiety increased. Endeavouring to breathe into his army his own spirit, and to give them his own feeling, he thus addressed them. "The enemy's whole reinforcement is now arrived; so that an attack must, and will soon be made. The General, therefore, again repeats his earnest request that every officer and soldier will have his arms and ammunition in good order; keep within his quarters and encampments as far as possible; be ready for action at a moment's call; and when called to it, remember, that liberty, property, life, and honour, are all at stake; that upon their courage and conduct, rest the hopes of their bleeding and insulted country; that their wives, children, and parents, expect safety from them only; and that we have every reason to believe, that heaven will crown with success so just a cause.

"The enemy will endeavour to intimidate by show and appearance, but remember, they have been repulsed on various occasions by a few brave Americans; their cause is bad; and if opposed with firmness and coolness on their first onset, with our advantage of works, and knowledge of the ground, the victory is most assuredly ours. Every good soldier will be silent and attentive, wait for orders, and reserve his fire until he is sure of doing execution; of this the officers are to be particularly careful."

He directed explicitly that any soldier who should attempt to conceal himself, or retreat without orders, should instantly be shot down; and solemnly promised to notice and reward those who should distinguish themselves. Thus did he, by infusing those sentiments which would stimulate to the greatest individual exertion, into every bosom, endeavour to compensate for the want of arms, of discipline, and of numbers.

As the defence of Long Island was intimately connected with that of New York, a brigade had been stationed at Brooklyn, a post capable of being maintained for a considerable time. An extensive camp had been marked out and fortified at the same place. Brooklyn is a village on a small peninsula made by East river, the Bay, and Gowan's Cove. The encampment fronted the main land of the island, and the works stretched quite across the peninsula, from Whaaleboght Bay in the East river on the left, to a deep marsh on a creek emptying into Gowan's Cove, on the right. The rear was covered and defended against an attack from the ships, by strong batteries on Red Hook and on Governor's Island, which in a great measure commanded that part of the bay, and by other batteries on East river, which kept open the communication with York Island. In front of the camp was a range of hills covered with thick woods, which extended from east to west nearly the length of the island, and across which were three different roads leading to Brooklyn ferry. These hills, though steep, are every where passable by infantry.

The movements of General Howe indicating an intention to make his first attack on Long Island, General Sullivan was strongly reinforced. Early in the morning of the twenty-second, the principal part of the British army, under the command of General Clinton, landed under cover of the guns of the fleet, and extended from the ferry at the

August.

Narrows, through Utrecht and Gravesend, to the village of Flatland.[1]

Aug. 23.

Confident that an engagement must soon take place, General Washington made still another effort to inspire his troops with the most determined courage. "The enemy," said he, in addressing them, "have now landed on Long Island, and the hour is fast approaching, on which the honour and success of this army, and the safety of our bleeding country depend. Remember, officers and soldiers, that you are freemen, fighting for the blessings of liberty—that slavery will be your portion and that of your posterity, if you do not acquit yourselves like men." He repeated his instructions respecting their conduct in action, and concluded with the most animating and encouraging exhortations.

Aug. 25.

Major General Putnam was now directed to take command at Brooklyn, with a reinforcement of six regiments; and he was charged most earnestly by the Commander-in-chief, to be in constant readiness for an attack, and to guard the woods between the two camps with his best troops.

Aug. 26

General Washington had passed the day at Brooklyn, making arrangements for the approaching action; and, at night, had returned to New York.

The Hessians under General De Heister composed the centre of the British army at Flatbush; Major General Grant commanded the left wing which extended to the coast, and the greater part of the British forces under General Clinton, Earl Percy and Lord Cornwallis turned short to the right, and approached the opposite coast of Flatland.[1]

The two armies were now separated from each other by the range of hills already mentioned. The British centre at Flatbush was scarcely four miles distant from the American lines at Brooklyn; and a direct road led across the heights from the one to the other. Another road, rather more circuitous than the first, led from Flatbush by the way of Bedford, a small village on the Brooklyn side of the hills. The right and left wings of the British army were nearly equi-distant from the American works, and about five or six miles from them. The road leading from the Narrows along the coast, and by the way of Gowan's Cove, afforded the most direct route to their left; and their right might either return by the way of Flatbush and unite with the centre, or take a more circuitous course, and enter a road leading from Jamaica to Bedford. These several roads unite between Bedford and Brooklyn, a small distance in front of the American lines.

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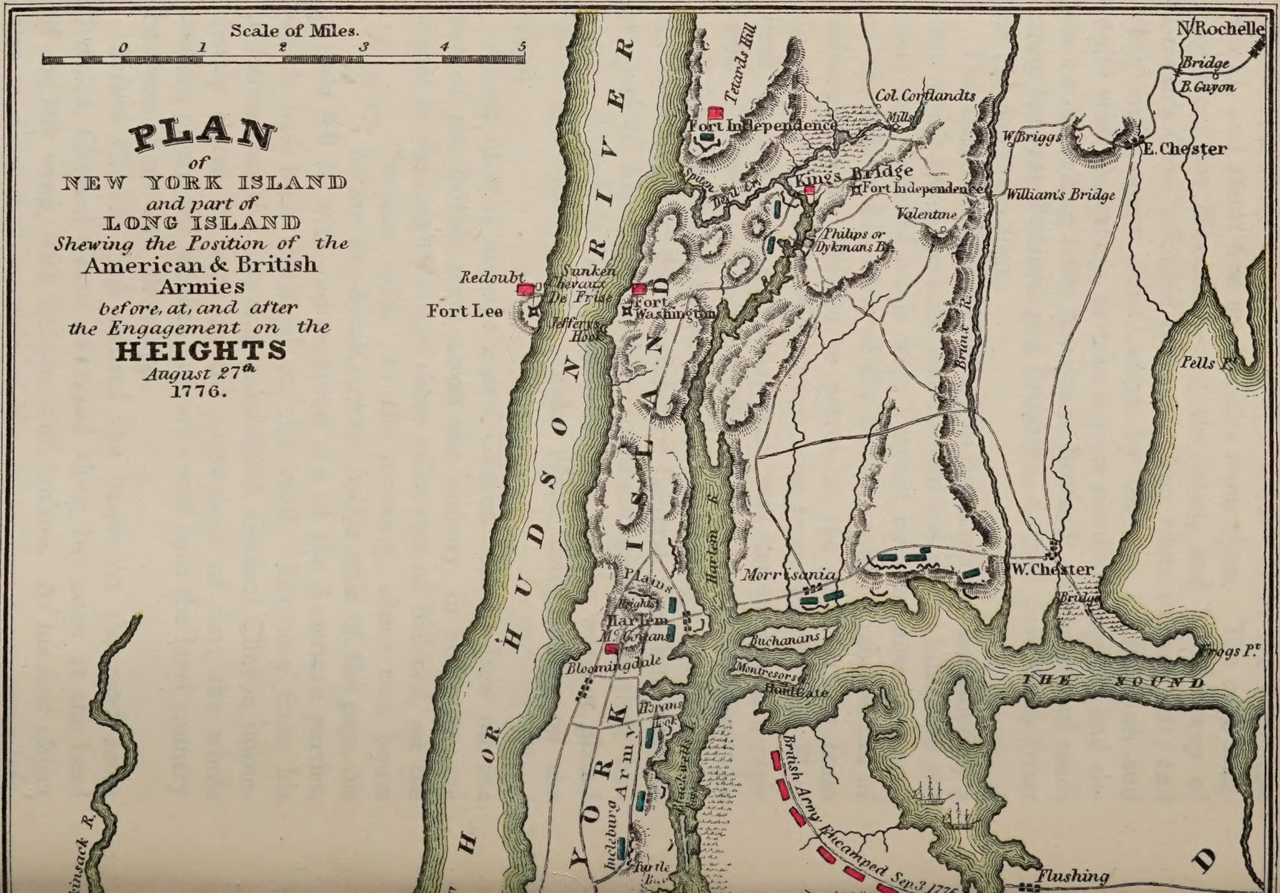
[1] General Howe's letter.

The direct road from Flatbush to Brooklyn was defended by a fort which the Americans had constructed in the hills; and the coast and Bedford roads were guarded by detachments posted on the hills within view of the British camp. Light parties of volunteers were directed to patrol on the road leading from Jamaica to Bedford; about two miles from which, near Flatbush, Colonel Miles of Pennsylvania was stationed with a regiment of riflemen. The convention of New York had directed a small body of militia to be assembled on the high grounds, near the enemy, under the command of General Woodhull, for the purpose of interrupting their communication with their numerous friends in that neighbourhood; but he was not placed under the orders of the regular officer commanding on the island.

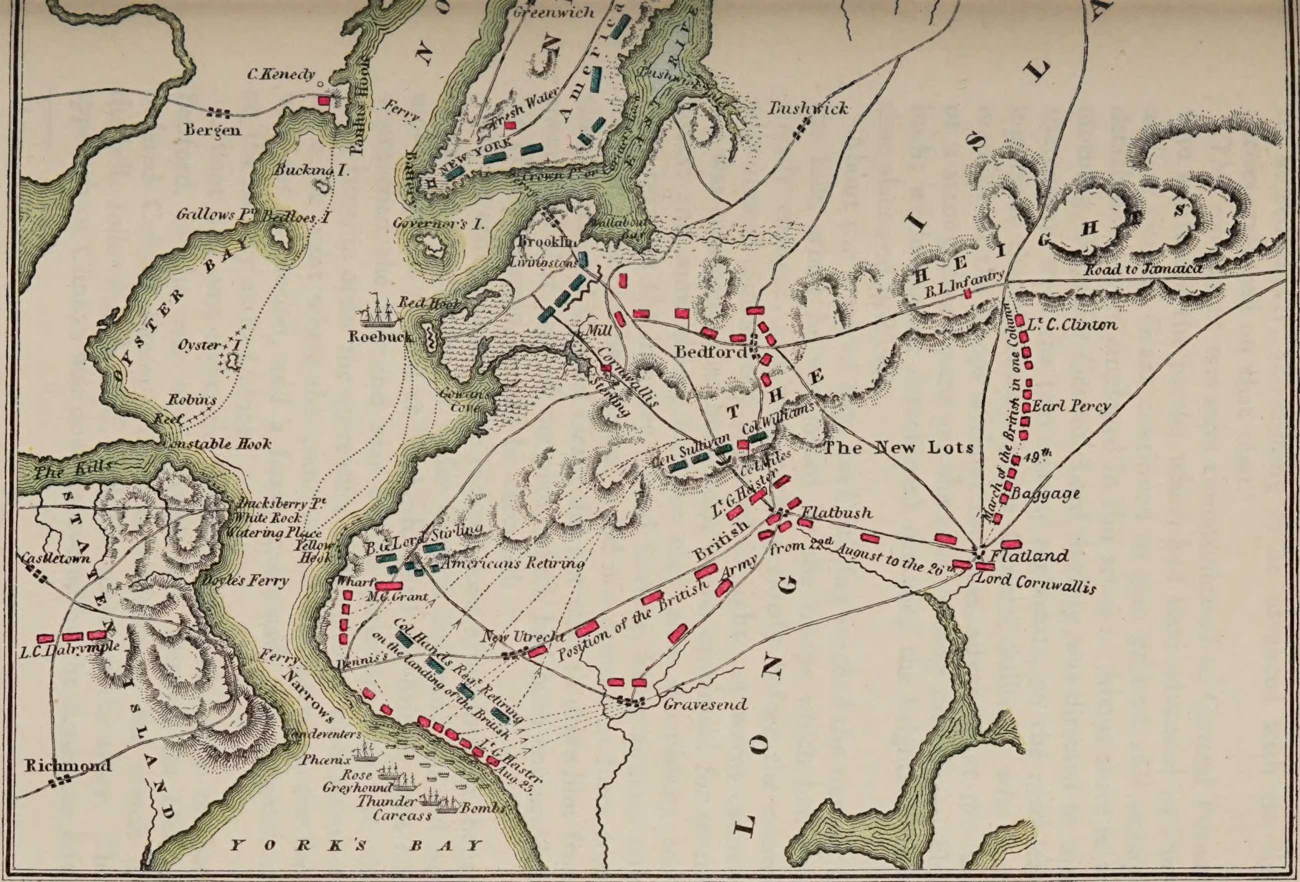
About nine at night, General Clinton silently drew off the van of the British army across the country, in order to seize a pass in the heights about three miles east of Bedford, on the
Aug. 27. Jamaica road. In the morning, about two hours before day-break, within half a mile of the pass, his patrols fell in with and captured one of the American parties, which had been stationed on this road. Learning from his prisoners that the pass was unoccupied, General Clinton immediately seized it; and, on the appearance of day, the whole column passed the heights, and advanced into the level country between them and Brooklyn.

Before Clinton had secured the passes on the road from Jamaica, General Grant advanced along the coast at the head of the left wing, with ten pieces of cannon. As his first object was to draw the attention of the Americans from their left,



PLAN
of
NEW YORK ISLAND
and part of
LONG ISLAND
Shewing the Position of the
American & British
Armies
before, at, and after
the Engagement on the
HEIGHTS
August 27th
1776.

Scale of Miles.
0
1
2
3
4
5
N. Rochelle
Bridge
B. Guyon
E. Chester
W. Briggs
William's Bridge
Col. Cortlandts
Mills
Tetards Hill
Fort Independence
Spiten
Devil Cr.
Kings Bridge
Fort Independence
Valentine
Philips or Dykmans Br.
Bruns R.
Pells Pt.
Redoubt
Sunken Chevaux De Frise
Fort Lee
Fort Washington
Jeffery's Hook
HUDSON OR H
RIVER
YORK ISLAND
Harlem R.
Morrisania
W. Chester
Bridge
Plains
Heights
Harlem
McGowans
Bloomingdale
Buchanans I.
Montresors I.
Hell Gate
Frogs Pt.
THE SOUND
Horans Hook
Blackwells I.
York Army
Incleburg
Turtle Bay
British Army Encamped Sep. 3 1776
Flushing
D
insack R.


C.Kenedy
Bergen
Paulus Hook
Ferry
Bucking I.
Gallows Pt
Bedloes I
OYSTER BAY
Oyster I
Robins Reef
Constable Hook
The Kills
STATEN ISLAND
Ducksberry Pt
White Rock
Watering Place
Yellow Hook
Castletown
Doyles Ferry
L.C.Dalrymple
Richmond
Ferry
Narrows
Vandeventers
Phœnix
Rose
Greyhound
Thunder
Carcass
Bombs
YORK'S BAY
Greenwich
NEW YORK
Fresh Water
America
Battery
Governor's I.
Crown Pt
EAST RIVER
Bushwick
Brooklin
Livingstons
Wallabout Bay
Red Hook
Roebuck
Gowan Cove
Mill
Cornwallis
Stirling
Bedford
THE HEIGHTS
B.L.Infantry
Road to Jamaica
Lt C.Clinton
March of the British in one Column
Earl Percy
49th
Baggage
The New Lots
Col. Williams
Gen Sullivan
Col. Miles
Lt G.Heister
Flatbush
Flatland
Lord Cornwallis
British Army from 22d August to the 26th
B.G.Lord Stirling
Americans Retiring
Wharf
M.G.Grant
Col. Hands Regt Retiring on the landing of the British
Dennis's
New Utrecht
Position of the British
Gravesend
Lt G.Heister Aug. 25.
LONG ISLAND

Engraved by J. Yeager.

he moved slowly, skirmishing as he advanced with the light parties stationed on that road.[1]

This movement was soon communicated to General Putnam, who reinforced the parties which had been advanced in front; and, as General Grant continued to gain ground, still stronger detachments were employed in this service. About three in the morning, Brigadier General Lord Stirling was directed to meet the enemy, with the two nearest regiments, on the road leading from the Narrows. Major General Sullivan, who commanded all the troops without the lines, advanced at the head of a strong detachment on the road leading directly to Flatbush; while another detachment occupied the heights between that place and Bedford.

About the break of day, Lord Stirling reached the summit of the hills, where he was joined by the troops which had been already engaged, and were retiring slowly before the enemy, who almost immediately appeared in sight. A warm cannonade was commenced on both sides, which continued for several hours; and some sharp, but not very close skirmishing took place between the infantry. Lord Stirling, being anxious only to defend the pass he guarded, could not descend in force from the heights; and General Grant did not wish to drive him from them until that part of the plan, which had been entrusted to Sir Henry Clinton, should be executed.

In the centre, General De Heister, soon after daylight, began to cannonade the troops under General Sullivan; but did not move from his ground at Flatbush, until the British right had approached the left and rear of the American line. In the mean time, in order the more effectually to draw their attention from the point where the grand attack was intended, the fleet was put in motion, and a heavy cannonade was commenced on the battery at Red Hook.

About half past eight, the British right having then reached Bedford, in the rear of Sullivan's left, General De Heister ordered Colonel Donop's corps to advance to the attack of the hill; following, himself, with the centre of the army. The approach of Clinton was now discovered by the American left, which immediately endeavoured to regain the camp at Brooklyn. While retiring from the woods by regiments, they encountered the front of the British. About the same time, the Hessians advanced from Flatbush, against that part of the detachment which occupied the direct road to Brooklyn.[1] Here, General Sullivan commanded in person; but he found it difficult to keep his troops together long enough to sustain the first attack. The firing heard towards Bedford had disclosed the alarming fact, that the British had turned their left flank, and were getting completely into their rear. Perceiving at once the full danger of their situation, they sought to escape it by regaining the camp with the utmost possible celerity. The sudden rout of this party enabled De Heister to detach a part of his force against those who were engaged near Bedford. In that quarter, too, the Americans were broken, and driven back into the woods; and the front of the column led by General Clinton, continuing to move forward, intercepted and engaged those who were retreating along the direct road from Flatbush. Thus attacked both in front and rear, and alternately driven by the British on the Hessians, and by the Hessians back again on the British, a succession of skirmishes took place in the woods, in the course of which, some parts of corps, forced their way through the enemy, and regained the lines of Brooklyn, and several individuals saved themselves under cover of the woods, but a great proportion of the detachment was killed or taken. The fugitives were pursued up to the American works; and such is represented to have been the ardour of the British soldiers, that it required the authority of their cautious commander to prevent an immediate assault.

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[1] General Howe's letter.

The fire towards Brooklyn gave the first intimation to the American right, that the enemy had gained their rear. Lord Stirling perceived the danger, and that he could only escape it by retreating instantly across the creek. This movement was immediately directed; and, to secure it, his lordship determined to attack, in person, a British corps under Lord Cornwallis, stationed at a house rather above the place at which he intended to cross the creek. About four hundred men of Smallwood's regiment were drawn out for this purpose, and the attack was made with great spirit. This small corps was brought up several times to the charge; and Lord Stirling stated that he was on the point of dislodging Lord Cornwallis from his post; but the force in his front increasing and General Grant also advancing on his rear, the brave men he commanded were no longer able to oppose the superior numbers which assailed them on every quarter; and those who survived were, with their General, made prisoners of war. This attempt, though unsuccessful, gave an opportunity to a large part of the detachment to save themselves by crossing the creek.

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[1] General Howe's letter.

The loss sustained by the American army in this battle could not be accurately ascertained by either party. Numbers were supposed to have been drowned in the creek, or suffocated in the marsh, whose bodies were never found; and exact accounts from the militia are seldom to be obtained, as the list of the missing is always swelled by those who return to their homes. General Washington did not admit it to exceed a thousand men; but in this estimate he must have included only the regular troops. In the letter written by General Howe, the amount of prisoners is stated at one thousand and ninety-seven; among whom were Major General Sullivan, and Brigadiers Lord Stirling and Woodhull, by him named Udell. He computes the loss of the Americans at three thousand three hundred men; but his computation is probably excessive. He supposes, too, that the troops engaged on the heights, amounted to ten thousand; but they could not have much exceeded half that number. His own loss, is stated at twenty-one officers, and three hundred and forty-six privates; killed, wounded and taken.

As the action became warm, General Washington passed over to the camp at Brooklyn, where he saw, with inexpressible anguish, the destruction in which his best troops were involved, and from which it was impossible to extricate them. Should he attempt anything in their favour with the men remaining within the lines, it was probable the camp itself would be lost, and that whole division of his army destroyed. Should he bring over the remaining battalions from New York, he would still be inferior in point of numbers; and his whole army, perhaps the fate of his country, might be staked on the issue of a single battle thus inauspiciously commenced. Compelled to behold the carnage of his troops, without being able to assist them, his efforts were directed to the preservation of those which remained.

Believing the Americans to be much stronger than they were in reality, and unwilling to commit any thing to hazard, General Howe made no immediate attempt to force their lines. He encamped in front of them; and, on the twenty-eighth at night, broke ground in form, within six hundred yards of a redoubt on the left.

In this critical state of things, General Washington determined to withdraw from Long Island. This difficult movement was effected on the night of the twenty-eighth, with such silence, that all the troops and military stores, with the greater part of the provisions, and all the artillery, except such heavy pieces as could not be drawn through the roads, rendered almost impassable by the rains which had fallen, were carried over in safety. Early next morning, the British out-posts perceived the rear guard crossing the East river, out of reach of their fire. Aug. 29.

From the commencement of the action on the morning of the twenty-seventh, until the American troops had crossed the East river on the morning of the twenty-ninth, the exertions and fatigues of the Commander-in-chief were incessant. Throughout that time, he never closed his eyes, and was almost constantly on horseback.

The manner in which this critical operation was executed, and the circumstances under which it was performed, added greatly to the reputation of the American general, in the opinion of all military men. To withdraw, without loss, a defeated, dispirited, and undisciplined army from the view of an experienced and able officer, and to transport them in safety across a large river, while watched by a numerous and vigilant fleet, require talents of no ordinary kind; and the retreat from Long Island may justly be ranked among those skilful manœuvres which distinguish a master in the art of war.

The attempt to defend Long Island was so perilous in itself, and so disastrous in its issue, that it was condemned by many at the time, and is yet represented as a great error of the Commander-in-chief. But, in deciding on the wisdom of measures, the event will not always lead to a correct judgment. Before a just opinion can be formed, it is necessary to consider the previous state of things—to weigh the motives which induced the decision—and to compare the value of the object, and the probability of securing it, with the hazards attending the attempt.

It was very desirable to preserve New York, if practicable; or, if that could not be done, to consume the campaign in the struggle for that place. The abandonment of Long Island, besides giving the enemy secure and immediate possession of an extensive and fertile country, would certainly facilitate the success of his attempt upon New York. It was therefore to be avoided, if possible.

The impossibility of avoiding it was not evident until the battle was fought. It is true, that the American force on the island could not have been rendered equal, even in point of numbers, to that of the British; but, with the advantage of the defencible country through which the assailants were to pass, and of a fortified camp which could be attacked only on one side, hopes might be entertained, without the imputation of being over sanguine, of maintaining the position for a considerable time; and, ultimately, of selling it at a high price. This opinion is supported by the subsequent movements of General Howe, who, even after the victory of the twenty-seventh, was unwilling to hazard an assault on the American works, without the co-operation of the fleet; but chose rather to carry them by regular approaches. Nor would the situation of the troops on Long Island have been desperate, even in the event of a conjoint attack by land and water, before their strength and spirits were broken by the action of the twenty-seventh. The East river was guarded by strong batteries on both sides, and the entrance into it from the bay was defended by Governor's Island, which was fortified, and in which two regiments were stationed. The ships could not lie in that river, without first silencing those batteries—a work not easily accomplished. The aid of the fleet, therefore, could be given only at the point of time when a storm of the works should be intended; and when that should appear practicable, the troops might be withdrawn from the island.

There was then considerable hazard in maintaining Long Island; but not so much as to demonstrate the propriety of relinquishing a post of such great importance, without a struggle.

With more appearance of reason, the General has been condemned for not having guarded the road which leads over the hills from Jamaica to Bedford.

The written instructions given to the officer commanding on Long Island, two days previous to the action, directed that the woods should be well guarded, and the approach of the enemy through them rendered as difficult as possible. But his numbers were not sufficient to furnish detachments for all the defiles through the mountains; and if a corps, capable of making an effectual resistance, had been posted on this road, and a feint had been made on it, while the principal attack was by the direct road from Flatbush, or by that along the coast, the events of the day would probably have been not less disastrous. The columns marching directly from Flatbush must, on every reasonable calculation, have been in possession of the plain in the rear of the detachment posted on the road from Jamaica, so as to intercept its retreat to the camp. So great is the advantage of those who attack, in being able to choose the point against which to direct their grand effort.

The most adviseable plan, then, appears to have been, to watch the motions of the enemy so as to be master of his designs; to oppose with a competent force every attempt to seize the heights; and to guard all the passes in such a manner as to receive notice of his approach through any one of them, in sufficient time to recall the troops maintaining the others.

This plan was adopted—and the heavy disasters of the day are attributable, principally, to the failure of those charged with the execution of that very important part of it which related to the Jamaica road. The letter of General Howe states that an American patrolling party was taken on this road; and General Washington, in a private and confidential communication to a friend, says, "This misfortune happened, in a great measure, by two detachments of our people who were posted in two roads leading through a wood, to intercept the enemy in their march, suffering a surprise, and making a precipitate retreat."

The events of this day, too, exhibited a practical demonstration of a radical defect in the structure of the army. It did not contain a single corps of cavalry. That miscalculating economy which refuses the means essential to the end, was not sufficiently relaxed to admit of so expensive an establishment. Had the General been furnished with a few troops of light-horse, to serve merely as videts, it is probable that the movement so decisive of the fate of the day could not have been made unnoticed. The troops on the lines do not appear to have observed the column which was withdrawn, on the evening of the twenty-sixth, from Flatbush to Flatland. Had this important manœuvre been communicated, it would, most probably, have turned the attention of General Putnam, more particularly, to the Jamaica road. It is to the want of videts that a failure to obtain this important intelligence is to be ascribed. The necessity of changing the officer originally intrusted with the command, was also an unfortunate circumstance, which probably contributed to the event which happened.

Whatever causes might have led to this defeat, it gave a gloomy aspect to the affairs of America. Heretofore, her arms had been frequently successful, and her soldiers had always manifested a great degree of intrepidity. A confidence in themselves, a persuasion of superiority over the enemy, arising from the goodness of their cause, and their early and habitual use of fire arms, had been carefully encouraged. This sentiment had been nourished by all their experience preceding this event. When they found themselves, by a course of evolutions in which they imagined they perceived a great superiority of military skill, encircled with unexpected dangers, from which no exertions could extricate them, their confidence in themselves and in their leaders was greatly diminished, and the approach of the enemy inspired the apprehension that some stratagem was concealed, from which immediate flight alone could preserve them.

In a letter from General Washington to congress, the state of the army after this event was thus feelingly described: "Our

Sept. 2. situation is truly distressing. The check our detachment sustained on the 27th ultimo, has dispirited too great a proportion of our troops, and filled their minds with apprehension and despair. The militia, instead of calling forth their utmost efforts to a brave and manly opposition, in order to repair our losses, are dismayed, intractable, and impatient to return. Great numbers of them have gone off; in some instances, almost by whole regiments; in many, by half ones and by companies, at a time. This circumstance, of itself, independent of others, when fronted by a well appointed enemy, superior in number to our whole collected force, would be sufficiently disagreeable; but when it is added, that their example has infected another part of the army; that their want of discipline, and refusal of almost every kind of restraint and government, have rendered a like conduct but too common in the whole; and have produced an entire disregard of that order and subordination necessary for the well doing of an army, and which had been before inculcated as well as the nature of our military establishment would admit of; our condition is still more alarming, and with the deepest concern I am obliged to confess my want of confidence in the generality of the troops.

"All these circumstances fully confirm the opinion I ever entertained, and which I, more than once, in my letters, took the liberty of mentioning to congress, that no dependence could be placed in a militia, or other troops than those enlisted and embodied for a longer period than our regulations have hitherto prescribed. I am persuaded, and am as fully convinced as of any one fact that has happened, that our liberties must, of necessity, be greatly hazarded, if not entirely lost, if their defence be left to any but a permanent army."

The first use made by Lord Howe of the victory of the 27th of August, was to avail himself of the impression it had probably made on congress, by opening a negotiation in conformity with his powers as a commissioner. For this purpose, General Sullivan was sent on parole to Philadelphia, with a verbal message, the import of which was, "that though he could not at present treat with congress as a political body, yet he was very desirous of having a conference with some of its members, whom he would consider, for the present, only as private gentlemen, and meet them as such at any place they would appoint.

"That, in conjunction with General Howe, he had full powers to compromise the dispute between Great Britain and America, on terms advantageous to both; the obtaining of which detained him near two months in England, and prevented his arrival in New York before the declaration of independence took place.

"That he wished a compact might be settled at this time, when no decisive blow was struck, and neither party could allege being compelled to enter into such agreement.

"That in case congress were disposed to treat, many things which they had not as yet asked, might, and ought to be granted them; and that if, upon the conference, they found any probable ground of an accommodation, the authority of congress must be afterwards acknowledged—otherwise the compact would not be complete."

This proposition was not without its embarrassments. Its rejection would give some countenance to the opinion, that, if independence were waived, a restoration of the ancient connexion between the two countries, on principles formerly deemed constitutional, was still practicable; an opinion which would have an unfavourable effect on the public sentiment. On the other hand, to enter into a negotiation under such circumstances, might excite a suspicion, that their determination to maintain the independence they had declared, was not immoveable; and that things were in such a situation, as to admit of some relaxation in the measures necessary for the defence of the country.

The answer given to Lord Howe, through General Sullivan, was, "that congress, being the representatives of the free and independent States of America, can not, with propriety, send any of its members to confer with his Lordship in their private characters; but that, ever desirous of establishing peace on reasonable terms, they will send a committee of their body to know whether he has any authority to treat with persons authorized by congress for that purpose, on behalf of America; and what that authority is;—and to hear such propositions as he shall think proper to make, respecting the same."

The President was, at the same time, directed to communicate to General Washington the opinion of congress, that no propositions for making peace "ought to be received or attended to, unless the same be made in writing, and addressed to the representatives of the United States in congress, or persons authorized by them: And if applications on that subject be made to him by any of the commanders of the British forces, that he inform them, that these United States, who entered into the war only for the defence of their lives and liberties, will cheerfully agree to peace on reasonable terms, whenever such shall be proposed to them in manner aforesaid."

It is worthy of remark, that, in these resolutions, congress preserves the appearance of insisting on the independence of the United States, without declaring it to be the indispensable condition of peace.

Mr. Franklin, Mr. John Adams, and Mr. Edward Rutledge, all zealous supporters of independence, were appointed "to receive the communications of Lord Howe."

They waited on his Lordship; and, on their return, reported, that he had received them on the 11th of September, on Staten Island, opposite to Amboy, with great politeness.

He opened the conversation by acquainting them, that though he could not treat with them as a committee of congress, yet, as his powers enabled him to confer and consult with any private gentlemen of influence in the colonies, on the means of restoring peace between the two countries, he was glad of this opportunity of conferring with them on that subject; if they thought themselves at liberty to enter into a conference with him in that character. The committee observed to his Lordship, that, as their business was to hear, he might consider them in what light he pleased, and communicate to them any propositions he might be authorized to make for the purpose mentioned; but that they could consider themselves in no other character than that in which they were placed by order of congress. His Lordship then proceeded to open his views at some length. He offered peace only on the condition that the colonies should return to their allegiance and obedience to the British crown. He made no explicit propositions as inducements to this measure, but gave assurances that there was a good disposition in the king and his ministers to make the government easy to them, with intimations that, in case of submission, the offensive acts of parliament would be revised, and the instructions to the Governors reconsidered; so that, if any just causes of complaint were found in the acts, or any errors in government were found to have crept into the instructions, they might be amended or withdrawn.

The committee gave it as their opinion to his Lordship, that a return to the domination of Great Britain was not now to be expected. They mentioned the repeated humble petitions of the colonies to the king and parliament, which had been treated with contempt, and answered only by additional injuries; the unexampled patience which had been shown under their tyrannical government; and that it was not until the late act of parliament, which denounced war against them, and put them out of the king's protection, that they declared their independence; that this declaration had been called for by the people of the colonies in general, and that every colony had approved it when made,—and all now considered themselves as independent states, and were settling, or had settled, their governments accordingly; so that it was not in the power of congress to agree for them that they should return to their former dependent state; that there was no doubt of their inclination for peace, and their willingness to enter into a treaty with Britain, that might be advantageous to both countries; that though his Lordship had, at present, no power to treat with them as independent states, he might, if there was the same good disposition in Britain, much sooner obtain fresh powers from his government, for that purpose, than powers could be obtained by congress, from the several colonies, to consent to a submission.

His Lordship then expressed his regret that no accommodation was like to take place, and put an end to the conference.

These fruitless negotiations produced no suspension of hostilities.

The British army, now in full possession of Long Island, was posted from Bedford to Hurlgate; and thus fronted and threatened York Island from its extreme southern point, to the part opposite the northern boundary of Long Island, a small distance below the heights of Haerlem, comprehending a space of about nine miles.

The two armies were divided only by the East river, which is generally less than a mile wide.

Immediately after the victory at Brooklyn, dispositions were made by the enemy to attack New York, and a part of the fleet sailed round Long Island, and appeared in the Sound. Two frigates passed up the East river, without receiving any injury from the batteries, and anchored behind a small island which protected them from the American artillery. At the same time, the main body of the fleet lay at anchor close in with Governor's Island, from which the American troops had been withdrawn, ready to pass up either the North or East river, or both, and act against any part of York Island.

Sept. 4.

These movements indicated a disposition, not to make an attack directly on New York, as had been expected, but to land near Kingsbridge, and take a position which would cut off the communication of the American army with the country.

Aware of the danger of his situation, General Washington began to remove such stores as were not immediately necessary; and called a council of general officers for the purpose of deciding, whether New York should be evacuated without delay, or longer defended.

In his letter communicating to congress the result of this council, which was against an immediate evacuation, he manifested a conviction of the necessity of that measure, though he yielded to that necessity with reluctance. Speaking of the enemy, he observed, "It is now extremely obvious from their movements, from our intelligence, and from every other circumstance, that, having their whole army upon Long Island, except about four thousand men who remain on Staten Island, they mean to enclose us in this island, by taking post in our rear, while their ships effectually secure the front; and thus, by cutting off our communication with the country, oblige us to fight them on their own terms, or surrender at discretion; or, if that shall be deemed more adviseable, by a brilliant stroke endeavour to cut this army to pieces, and secure the possession of arms and stores, which they well know our inability to replace.

"Having their system unfolded to us, it becomes an important consideration how it could be most successfully opposed. On every side there is a choice of difficulties, and experience teaches us, that every measure on our part (however painful the reflection) must be taken with some apprehension, that all our troops will not do their duty.

"In deliberating upon this great question," he added, "it was impossible to forget that history, our own experience, the advice of our ablest friends in Europe, the fears of the enemy, and even the declarations of congress, demonstrate that, on our side, the war should be defensive;—(it has even been called a war of posts;)—that we should, on all occasions, avoid a general action, nor put any thing to the risk, unless compelled by necessity, into which we ought never to be drawn."

After communicating the decision which had been made by the council of officers, he stated the opinion of those who were in favour of an immediate evacuation with such force, as to confirm the belief that it remained his own.

The majority, who overruled this opinion, did not expect to be able to defend the city, permanently, but to defer the time of losing it, in the hope of wasting so much of the campaign, before General Howe could obtain possession of it, as to prevent his undertaking any thing farther until the following year. They therefore advised a middle course between abandoning the town absolutely, and concentrating their whole strength for its defence. This was, to form the army into three divisions; one of which should remain in New York; the second be stationed at Kingsbridge; and the third occupy the intermediate space, so as to support either extreme. The sick were to be immediately removed to Orange Town. A belief that congress was inclined to maintain New York at every hazard, and a dread of the unfavourable impression which its evacuation might make on the people, seem to have had great influence in producing the determination to defend the place yet a short time longer.

This opinion was soon changed. The movements of the British general indicated clearly an intention either to break their line of communication, or to enclose the whole army in York Island. His dispositions were alike calculated to favour the one or the other of those objects. The

Sept. 10.

Sept. 12.

general, who had continued to employ himself assiduously in the removal of the military stores to a place of safety,[1] called a second council to deliberate on the farther defence of the city, which determined, by a large majority, that it had become not only prudent, but absolutely necessary to withdraw the army from New York.

In consequence of this determination, Brigadier General Mercer, who commanded the flying camp on the Jersey shore, was directed to move up the North river, to the post opposite fort Washington; and every effort was used to expedite the removal of the stores.

Sept. 15.

On the morning of the fifteenth, three ships of war proceeded up the North river as high as Bloomingdale; a movement which entirely stopped the farther removal of stores by water. About eleven on the same day, Sir Henry Clinton, with a division of four thousand men who had embarked at the head of New Town bay, where they had lain concealed from the view of the troops posted on York Island, proceeded through that bay into the East river, which he crossed; and, under cover of the fire of five men of war, landed at a place called Kipp's bay, about three miles above New York.

The works thrown up to oppose a landing at this place, were of considerable strength, and capable of being defended for some time; but the troops stationed in them abandoned them without waiting to be attacked, and fled with precipitation. On the commencement of the cannonade, General Washington ordered the brigades of Parsons and Fellowes to the support of the troops posted in the lines, and rode himself towards the scene of action. The panic of those who had fled from the works, was communicated to the troops ordered to sustain them; and the Commander-in-chief had the extreme mortification to meet the whole party retreating in the utmost disorder, totally regardless of the great efforts made by their generals to stop their disgraceful flight. Whilst General Washington was exerting himself to rally them, a small corps of the enemy appeared; and they again broke and fled in confusion. The only part to be taken was immediately to withdraw the few remaining troops from New York, and to secure the posts on the heights. For this latter purpose, the lines were instantly manned; but no attempt was made to force them. The retreat from New York was effected with an inconsiderable loss of men, sustained in a skirmish at Bloomingdale; but all the heavy artillery, and a large portion of the baggage, provisions, and military stores, much of which might have been saved had the post at Kipp's bay been properly defended, were unavoidably abandoned. In this shameful day, one colonel, one captain, three subalterns, and ten privates were killed: one lieutenant colonel, one captain, and one hundred and fifty-seven privates were missing.

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[1] He had, on the first appearance of the enemy in force before New York, urged the removal of the women and children, with their most valuable effects, to a place of safety.

The unsoldierly conduct displayed on this occasion was not attributable to a want of personal courage, but to other causes. The apprehensions excited by the defeat on Long Island had not yet subsided; nor had the American troops recovered their confidence either in themselves or in their commanders. Their situation appeared to themselves to be perilous; and they had not yet acquired that temper which teaches the veteran to do his duty wherever he may be placed; to assure himself that others will do their duty likewise; and to reply that those, who take into view the situation of the whole, will not expose him to useless hazard; or neglect those precautions which the safety and advantage of the whole may require.

Unfortunately, there existed in a great part of the army, several causes, in addition to the shortness of enlistments and reliance on militia, which were but too operative in obstructing the progress of these military sentiments. In New England, whence the supplies of men had been principally drawn, the zeal excited by the revolution had taken such a direction, as in a great degree to abolish those distinctions between the platoon officers and the soldiers, which are indispensable to the formation of an army suited to all the purposes of war. It has been already said that these officers, who constitute an important part of every army, were, in many companies, elected by the privates. Of consequence, a disposition to associate with them on the footing of equality, was a recommendation of more weight, and frequently conducted more to the choice, than individual merit.

Gentlemen of high rank have stated that, in some instances, men were elected, who agreed to put their pay in a common stock with that of the soldiers, and divide equally with them. It is not cause of wonder, that among such officers, the most disgraceful and unmilitary practices should frequently prevail; and that the privates should not respect them sufficiently, to acquire habits of obedience and subordination. This vital defect had been in some degree remedied, in new modelling the army before Boston; but it still existed to a fatal extent.

Sept. 15. Having taken possession of New York, General Howe stationed a few troops in the town; and, with the main body of his army, encamped on the island near the American lines. His right was at Horen's Hook on the East river, and his left reached the North river near Bloomingdale; so that his encampment extended quite across the island, which is, in this place, scarcely two miles wide; and both his flanks were covered by his ships.

The strongest point of the American lines was at Kingsbridge, both sides of which had been carefully fortified. M‘Gowan's Pass, and Morris's Heights were also occupied in considerable force, and rendered capable of being defended against superior numbers. A strong detachment was posted in an intrenched camp on the heights of Haerlem, within about a mile and a half of the British lines.

The present position of the armies favoured the views of the American General. He wished to habituate his soldiers, by a series of successful skirmishes, to meet the enemy in the field; and he persuaded himself that his detachments, knowing a strong intrenched camp to be immediately in their rear, would engage without apprehension, would soon display their native courage, and would speedily regain the confidence they had lost.

Sept. 16. Opportunities to make the experiments he wished were soon afforded. The day after the retreat from New York, the British appeared in considerable force in the plains between the two camps; and the General immediately rode to his advanced posts, in order to make in person such arrangements as this movement might require. Soon after his arrival, Lieutenant Colonel Knowlton of Connecticut, who, at the head of a corps of rangers, had been skirmishing with this party, came in, and stated their numbers on conjecture at about three hundred men; the main body being concealed in a wood.

The General ordered Colonel Knowlton with his rangers, and Major Leitch with three companies of the third Virginia regiment, which had joined the army only the preceding day, to gain their rear, while he amused them with the appearance of making dispositions to attack their front.

This plan succeeded. The British ran eagerly down a hill, in order to possess themselves of some fences and bushes, which presented an advantageous position against the party expected in front; and a firing commenced—but at too great a distance to do any execution. In the mean time, Colonel Knowlton, not being precisely acquainted with their new position, made his attack rather on their flank than rear; and a warm action ensued.

In a short time, Major Leitch, who had led the detachment with great intrepidity, was brought off the ground mortally wounded, having received three balls through his body; and soon afterwards the gallant Colonel Knowlton also fell. Not discouraged by the loss of their field officers, the captains maintained their ground, and continued the action with great animation. The British were reinforced; and General Washington ordered some detachments from the adjacent regiments of New England and Maryland, to the support of the Americans. Thus reinforced, they made a gallant charge, drove the enemy out of the wood into the plain, and were pressing him still farther, when the General, content with the present advantage, called back his troops to their intrenchments.[1]

In this sharp conflict, the loss of the Americans, in killed and wounded, did not exceed fifty men. The British lost more than double that number. But the real importance of the affair was derived from its operation on the spirits of the whole army. It was the first success they had obtained during this campaign; and its influence was very discernible. To give it the more effect, the parole the next day was Leitch; and the General, in his orders, publicly thanked the troops under the command of that officer, who had first advanced on the enemy, and the others who had so resolutely supported them. He contrasted their conduct with that which had been exhibited the day before; and the result, he said, evidenced what might be done where officers and soldiers would exert themselves. Once more, therefore, he called upon them so to act, as not to disgrace the noble cause in which they were engaged. He appointed a successor to "the gallant and brave Colonel Knowlton, who would," he said, "have been an honour to any country, and who had fallen gloriously, fighting at his post."

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[1] The author received the account of this skirmish from the Colonel of the third Virginia Regiment, and from the Captains commanding the companies that were engaged.

In this active part of the campaign, when the utmost stretch of every faculty was required, to watch and counteract the plans of a skilful and powerful enemy, the effects of the original errors committed by the government, in its military establishment, were beginning to be so seriously felt, as to compel the Commander-in-chief to devote a portion of his time and attention to the complete removal of the causes which produced them.

The situation of America was becoming extremely critical. The almost entire dissolution of the existing army, by the expiration of the time for which the greater number of the troops had been engaged, was fast approaching. No steps had been taken to recruit the new regiments which congress had resolved to raise for the ensuing campaign and there was much reason to apprehend, that in the actual state of things, the terms offered would not hold forth sufficient inducements to fill them.

With so unpromising a prospect before him, the General found himself pressed by an army, permanent in its establishment, supplied with every requisite of war, formidable for its discipline and the experience of its leaders, and superior to him in numbers. These circumstances, and the impressions they created, will be best exhibited by an extract from a letter written at the time to congress. It is in these words: "From the hours allotted to sleep, I will borrow a few moments to convey my thoughts, on sundry important matters, to congress. I shall offer them with that sincerity which ought to characterize a man of candour; and with the freedom which may be used in giving useful information, without incurring the imputation of presumption.

Sept. 24.

"We are now, as it were, upon the eve of another dissolution of our army. The remembrance of the difficulties which happened upon that occasion last year; the consequences which might have followed the change, if proper advantages had been taken by the enemy; added to a knowledge of the present temper and disposition of the troops; reflect but a very gloomy prospect upon the appearance of things now, and satisfy me, beyond the possibility of doubt, that unless some speedy and effectual measures are adopted by congress, our cause will be lost.

"It is in vain to expect that any, or more than a trifling part of this army, will engage again in the service, on the encouragement offered by congress. When men find that their townsmen and companions are receiving twenty, thirty, and more dollars, for a few months service, (which is truly the case,) this can not be expected, without using compulsion; and to force them into the service would answer no valuable purpose. When men are irritated, and their passions inflamed, they fly hastily and cheerfully to arms; but after the first emotions are over, to expect among such people as compose the bulk of an army, that they are influenced by any other motives than those of interest, is to look for what never did, and I fear never will happen; the congress will deceive themselves therefore if they expect it.

"A soldier, reasoned with upon the goodness of the cause he is engaged in, and the inestimable rights he is contending for, hears you with patience, and acknowledges the truth of your observations; but adds, that it is of no more consequence to him than to others. The officer makes you the same reply, with this further remark, that his pay will not support him, and he can not ruin himself and family to serve his country, when every member of the community is equally benefited and interested by his labours. The few, therefore, who act upon principles of disinterestedness, are, comparatively speaking, no more than a drop in the ocean. It becomes evidently clear, then, that as this contest is not likely to become the work of a day; as the war must be carried on systematically; and to do it, you must have good officers; there is, in my judgment, no other possible means to obtain them, but by establishing your army upon a permanent footing, and giving your officers good pay. This will induce gentlemen, and men of character, to engage; and, until the bulk of your officers are composed of such persons as are actuated by principles of honour and a spirit of enterprise, you have little to expect from them. They ought to have such allowances as will enable them to live like, and support the character of gentlemen, and not be driven by a scanty pittance to the low and dirty arts which many of them practise, to filch the public of more than the difference of pay would amount to, upon an ample allowance. Besides, something is due to the man who puts his life in your hands, hazards his health, and forsakes the sweets of domestic enjoyments. Why a captain in the continental service, should receive no more than five shillings currency per day, for performing the same duties that an officer of the same rank in the British service receives ten shillings sterling for, I never could conceive; especially, when the latter is provided with every necessary he requires, upon the best terms, and the former can scarcely procure them at any rate. There is nothing that gives a man consequence, and renders him fit for command, like a support that renders him independent of every body but the state he serves.

"With respect to the men, nothing but a good bounty can obtain them upon a permanent establishment, and for no shorter time than the continuance of the war ought they to be engaged; as facts incontestably prove that the difficulty and cost of enlistments increase with time. When the army was first raised at Cambridge, I am persuaded the men might have been got, without a bounty, for the war: after that, they began to see that the contest was not likely to end so speedily as was imagined, and to feel their consequence, by remarking, that to get their militia, in the course of the last year, many towns were induced to give them a bounty. Foreseeing the evils resulting from this, and the destructive consequences which would unavoidably follow short enlistments, I took the liberty, in a long letter, (date not now recollected, as my letter book is not here,) to recommend the enlistments for and during the war, assigning such reasons for it, as experience has since convinced me, were well founded. At that time, twenty dollars would, I am persuaded, have engaged the men for this term: but it will not do to look back—and if the present opportunity is slipped, I am persuaded that twelve months more will increase our difficulties four fold. I shall therefore take the liberty of giving it as my opinion, that a good bounty be immediately offered, aided by the proffer of at least a hundred, or a hundred and fifty acres of land, and a suit of clothes, and a blanket, to each non-commissioned officer and soldier, as I have good authority for saying, that however high the men's pay may appear, it is barely sufficient, in the present scarcity and dearness of all kinds of goods, to keep them in clothes, much less to afford support to their families. If this encouragement, then, is given to the men, and such pay allowed to the officers, as will induce gentlemen of liberal character and liberal sentiments to engage; and proper care and caution be used in the nomination, (having more regard to the characters of persons than the number of men they can enlist,) we should, in a little time, have an army able to cope with any that can be opposed to it, as there are excellent materials to form one out of: but whilst the only merit an officer possesses is his ability to raise men; whilst those men consider and treat him as an equal, and in the character of an officer, regard him no more than a broomstick, being mixed together as one common herd; no order nor discipline can prevail, nor will the officer ever meet with that respect which is essentially necessary to due subordination.

"To place any dependence upon militia, is assuredly resting upon a broken staff. Men just dragged from the tender scenes of domestic life; unaccustomed to the din of arms; totally unacquainted with every kind of military skill, which, being followed by a want of confidence in themselves, when opposed to troops regularly trained, disciplined, and appointed—superior in knowledge, and superior in arms—makes them timid, and ready to fly from their own shadows. Besides, the sudden change in their manner of living, particularly in their lodging, brings on sickness in many, impatience in all; and such an unconquerable desire of returning to their respective homes, that it not only produces shameful and scandalous desertions among themselves, but infuses the like spirit into others. Again, men accustomed to unbounded freedom and no control, can not brook the restraint which is indispensably necessary to the good order and government of an army; without which, licentiousness, and every kind of disorder, triumphantly reign. To bring men to a proper degree of subordination, is not the work of a day, a month, or a year; and unhappily for us, and the cause we are engaged in, the little discipline I have been labouring to establish in the army under my immediate command, is in a manner done away by having such a mixture of troops as have been called together within these few months."

The frequent remonstrances of the Commander-in-chief; the opinions of all military men; and the severe, but correcting hand of experience, had at length produced some effect on the government of the union;—and soon after the defeat on Long Island, congress had directed the committee composing the board of war, to prepare a plan of operations for the next succeeding campaign. Their report proposed a permanent army to be enlisted for the war, and to be raised by the several states, in proportion to their ability. A bounty of twenty dollars was offered to each recruit; and small portions of land to every officer and soldier.

The resolutions adopting this report were received by the Commander-in-chief soon after the transmission of the foregoing letter. Believing the inducements they held forth for the completion of the army to be still insufficient, he, in his letter acknowledging the receipt of them, urged in the most serious terms, the necessity of raising the pay of the officers, and the bounty offered to recruits. "Give me leave to say, sir," he observed, "I say it with due deference and respect, (and my knowledge of the facts, added to the importance of the cause, and the stake I hold it in, must justify the freedom,) that your affairs are in a more unpromising way than you seem to apprehend.

"Your army, as mentioned in my last, is upon the eve of political dissolution. True it is, you have voted a larger one in lieu of it; but the season is late, and there is a material difference between voting battalions, and raising men. In the latter, there are more difficulties than Congress seem aware of; which makes it my duty (as I have been informed of the prevailing sentiments of this army) to inform them, that unless the pay of the officers (especially that of the field officers) is raised, the chief part of those that are worth retaining will leave the service at the expiration of the present term; as the soldiers will also, if some greater encouragement is not offered them, than twenty dollars and one hundred acres of land."

After urging in strong terms the necessity of a more liberal compensation to the army, and stating that the British were actually raising a regiment with a bounty of ten pounds sterling for each recruit, he added, "when the pay and establishment of an officer once become objects of interested attention, the sloth, negligence, and even disobedience of orders, which at this time but too generally prevail, will be purged off;—but while the service is viewed with indifference; while the officer conceives that he is rather conferring than receiving an obligation: there will be a total relaxation of all order and discipline; and every thing will move heavily on, to the great detriment of the service, and inexpressible trouble and vexation of the general.

"The critical situation of our affairs at this time will justify my saying, that no time is to be lost in making fruitless experiments. An unavailing trial of a month, to get an army upon the terms proposed, may render it impracticable to do it at all, and prove fatal to our cause; as I am not sure whether any rubs in the way of our enlistments, or unfavourable turn in our affairs, may not prove the means of the enemy's recruiting men faster than we do."

After stating at large the confusion and delay, inseparable from the circumstance that the appointments for the new army were to be made by the states, the letter proceeds, "upon the present plan, I plainly foresee an intervention of time between the old and new army, which must be filled with militia, if to be had, with whom no man, who has any regard for his own reputation, can undertake to be answerable for consequences. I shall also be mistaken in my conjectures, if we do not lose the most valuable officers in this army, under the present mode of appointing them; consequently, if we have an army at all, it will be composed of materials not only entirely raw, but, if uncommon pains are not taken, entirely unfit: and I see such a distrust and jealousy of military power, that the Commander-in-chief has not an opportunity, even by recommendation, to give the least assurances of reward for the most essential services.

"In a word, such a cloud of perplexing circumstances appears before me, without one flattering hope, that I am thoroughly convinced, unless the most vigorous and decisive exertions are immediately adopted to remedy these evils, the certain and absolute loss of our liberties will be the inevitable consequence: as one unhappy stroke will throw a powerful weight into the scale against us, and enable General Howe to recruit his army, as fast as we shall ours; numbers being disposed, and many actually doing so already. Some of the most probable remedies, and such as experience has brought to my more intimate knowledge, I have taken the liberty to point out; the rest I beg leave to submit to the consideration of congress.

"I ask pardon for taking up so much of their time with my opinions, but I should betray that trust which they and my country have reposed in me, were I to be silent upon matters so extremely interesting."

On receiving this very serious letter, congress passed resolutions conforming to many of its suggestions. The pay of the officers was raised, and a suit of clothes allowed annually to each soldier: The legislatures of the states having troops in the continental service, either at New York, Ticonderoga, or New Jersey, were requested to depute committees to those places in order to officer the regiments on the new establishment: and it was recommended to the committees to consult the General on the subject of appointments.

CHAPTER VI

THE armies did not long retain their position on York Island. General Howe was sensible of the strength of the American camp, and was not disposed to force it. His plan was to compel General Washington to abandon it, or to give battle in a situation in which a defeat must be attended with the total destruction of his army. With this view, after throwing up entrenchments on M'Gowan's hill for the protection of New York, he determined to gain the rear of the American camp, by the New England road, and also to possess himself of the North river above Kingsbridge. To assure himself of the practicability of acquiring the command of the river, three frigates passed up it under the fire from fort Washington, and from the opposite post on the Jersey shore, afterwards called fort Lee, without sustaining any injury from the batteries, or being impeded by the chevaux-de-frise which had been sunk in the channel between those forts. 1776. Oct. 9.

This point being ascertained, he embarked a great part of his army on board flat bottomed boats, and, passing through Hurl Gate into the Sound, landed at Frog's Neck, about nine miles from the camp on the heights of Haerlem. Oct. 12

In consequence of this movement, Washington strengthened the post at Kingsbridge, and detached some regiments to West Chester for the purpose of skirmishing with the enemy, so soon as he should march from the ground he occupied. The road from Frog's Point to Kingsbridge leads through a strong country, intersected by numerous stone fences, so as to render it difficult to move artillery, or even infantry, in compact columns, except along the main road, which had been broken up in several places. The General, therefore, entertained sanguine hopes of the event, should a direct attack be made on his camp.

General Howe continued some days waiting for his artillery, military stores, and reinforcements from Staten Island, which were detained by unfavourable winds.

In the mean time, as the habits of thinking in America required that every important measure should be the result of consultation, and should receive the approbation of a majority, the propriety of removing the American army from its present situation was submitted to a council of the general officers. Oct. 16. After much investigation, it was declared to be impracticable, without a change of position, to keep up their communication with the country, and avoid being compelled to fight under great disadvantages, or to surrender themselves prisoners of war. General Lee, who had just arrived from the south, and whose experience as well as late success gave great weight to his opinions, urged the necessity of this movement with much earnestness. It was, at the same time, determined to hold fort Washington, and to defend it as long as possible. A resolution of congress of the 11th of October, desiring General Washington, by every art and expense, to obstruct, if possible, the navigation of the river, contributed, not inconsiderably, to this determination.

In pursuance of this opinion of the military council, measures were taken for moving the army up the North river, so as to extend its front, or left, towards the White Plains, beyond the British right, and thus keep open its communication with the country. The right, or rear division, remained a few days longer about Kingsbridge under the command of General Lee, for the security of the heavy baggage and military stores, which, in consequence of the difficulty of obtaining wagons, could be but slowly removed.

General Howe, after uniting his forces at Pell's Point, moved forward his whole army, except four brigades destined for the defence of New York, through Pelham's manor, towards New Rochelle. Oct. 18. Some skirmishes took place on the march with a part of Glover's brigade, in which the conduct of the Americans was mentioned with satisfaction by the Commander-in-chief; and, as General Howe took post at New Rochelle, a village on the Sound, General Washington occupied the heights between that place and the North River. Oct. 21.

At New Rochelle, the British army was joined by the second division of Germans, under the command of General Knyphausen, and by an incomplete regiment of cavalry from Ireland; some of whom had been captured on their passage. Both armies now moved towards the White Plains, a strong piece of ground already occupied by a detachment of militia. The main body of the American troops formed a long line of entrenched camps, extending from twelve to thirteen miles, on the different heights from Valentine's Hill, near Kingsbridge, to the White Plains, fronting the British line of march, and the Brunx, which divided the two armies. The motions of General Howe were anxiously watched, not only for the purposes of security, and of avoiding a general action, but in order to seize any occasion which might present itself of engaging his out-posts with advantage. While the British army lay at New Rochelle, the position of a corps of American loyalists commanded by Major Rogers, was supposed to furnish such an occasion. He was advanced, farther eastward, to Mamaroneck, on the Sound, where he was believed to be covered by the other troops. An attempt was made to surprise him in the night, by a detachment which should pass between him and the main body of the British army, and, by a coup de main, bear off his whole corps. Major Rogers was surprised, and about sixty of his regiment killed and taken. The loss of the Americans was only two killed, and eight or ten wounded; among the latter was Major Green of Virginia, a brave officer, who led the detachment, and who received a ball through his body.

Not long afterwards, a regiment of Pennsylvania riflemen, under Colonel Hand, engaged an equal number of Hessian chasseurs, with some advantage.

The caution of the English general was increased by these evidences of enterprise in his adversary. His object seems to have been to avoid skirmishes, and to bring on a general action, if that could be effected under favourable circumstances; if not, he calculated on nearly all the advantages of a victory from the approaching dissolution of the American army. He proceeded therefore slowly. His march was in close order, his encampments compact, and well guarded with artillery; and the utmost circumspection was used to leave no vulnerable point.

As the sick and baggage reached a place of safety, General Washington gradually drew in his out-posts, and took possession of the heights on the east side of the Brunx, fronting the head of the British columns, at the distance of seven or eight miles from them. The next day, he was joined by General Lee, who after securing the sick and the baggage, had, with considerable address, brought up the rear division of the army; an operation the more difficult as the deficiency of teams was such that a large portion of the labour usually performed by horses or oxen, devolved on men.

General Washington was encamped on high broken ground, with his right flank on the Brunx. This stream meandered so as also to cover the front of his right wing, which extended along the road leading towards New Rochelle, as far as the brow of the hill where his centre was posted. His left, which formed almost a right angle with his centre, and was nearly parallel to his right, extended along the hills northward, so as to keep possession of the commanding ground, and secure a retreat, should it be necessary, to a still stronger position in his rear.

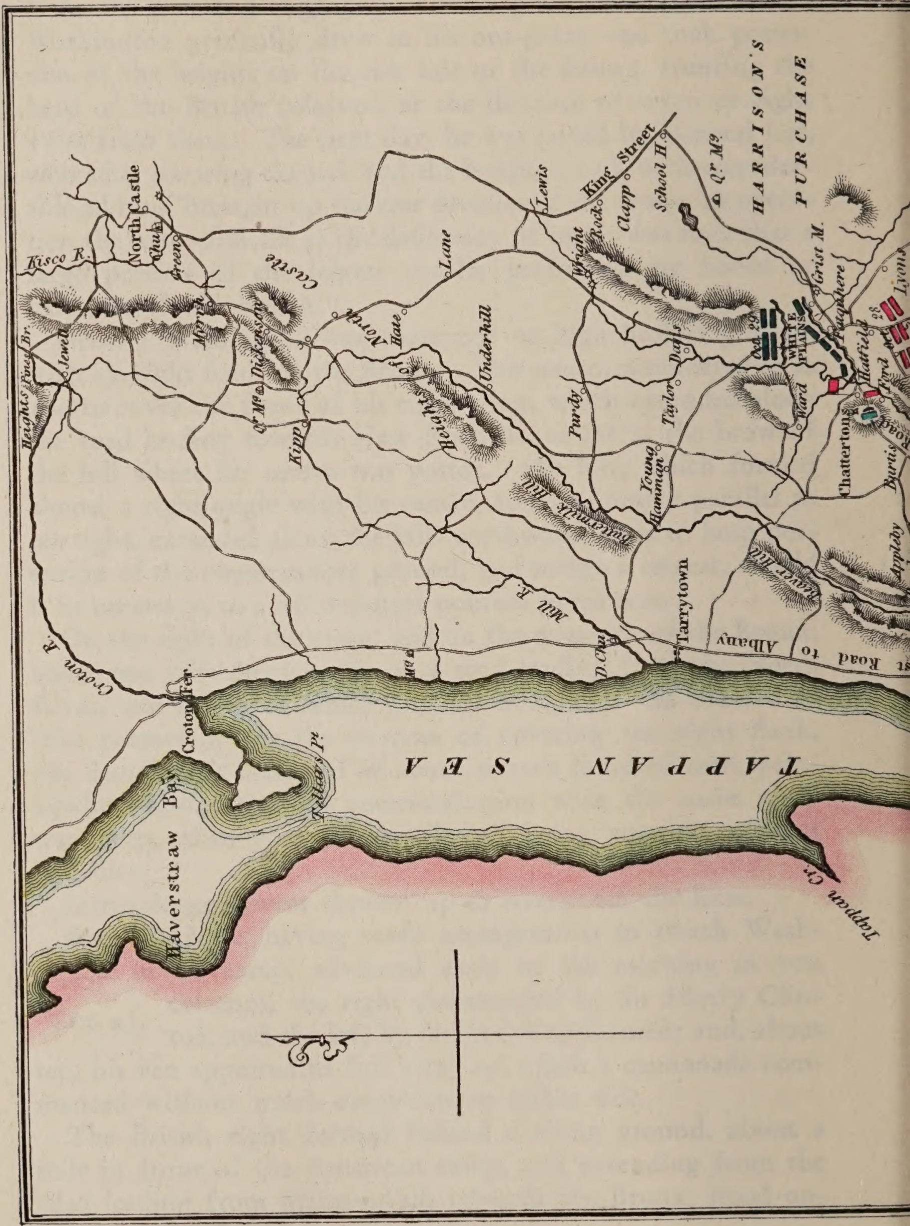
On the right of the army, and on the west side of the Brunx, about one mile from camp, on a road leading from the North River, was a hill, of which General M'Dougal was ordered to take possession, for the purpose of covering the right flank. His detachment consisted of about sixteen hundred men, principally militia; and his communication with the main army was open, that part of the Brunx being passable without difficulty.

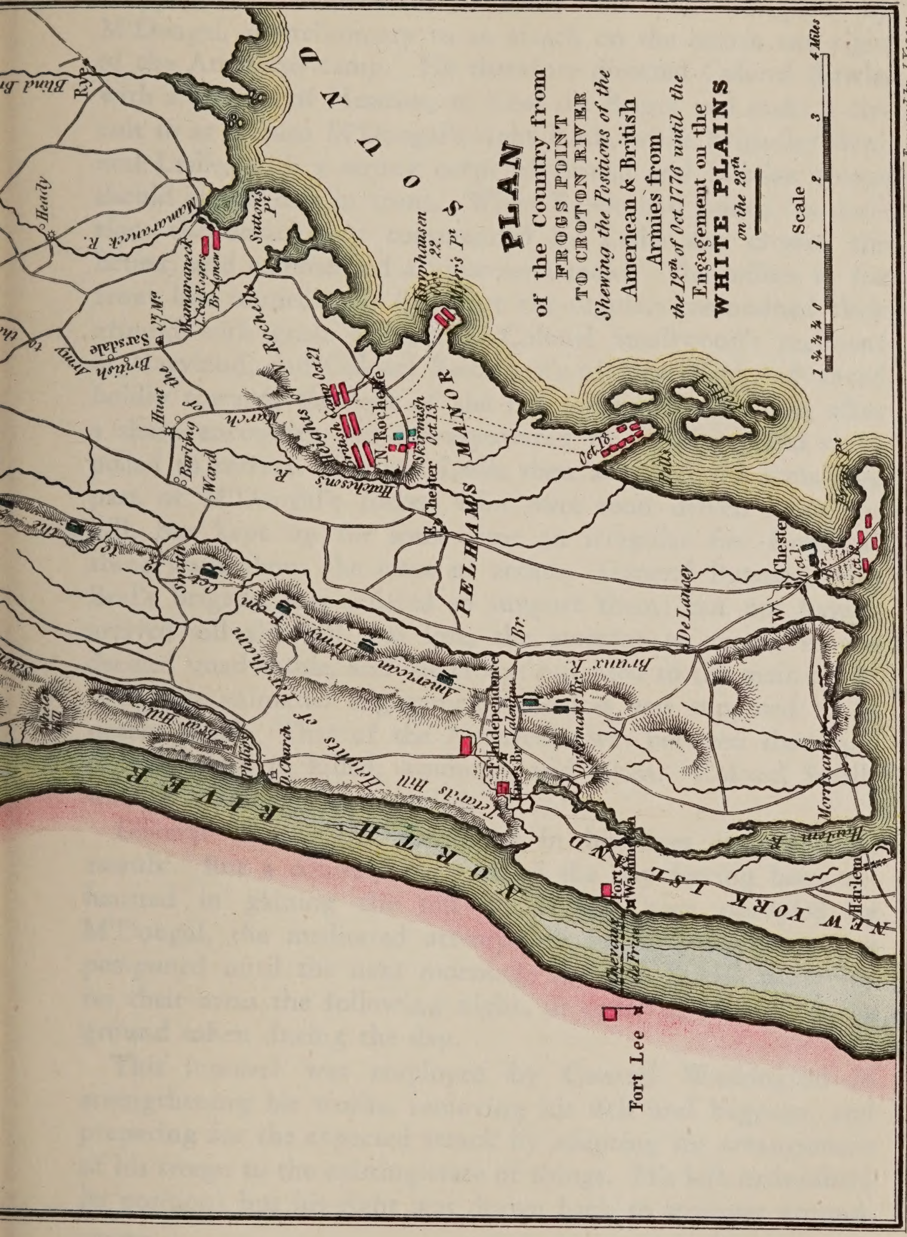
Intrenchments were thrown up to strengthen the lines.

General Howe, having made arrangements to attack Washington in his camp, advanced early in the morning in two columns, the right commanded by Sir Henry Clinton, and the left by General Knyphausen; and, about ten, his van appeared in full view, on which a cannonade commenced without much execution on either side. Oct. 25.

The British right formed behind a rising ground, about a mile in front of the American camp, and extending from the road leading from Mamaraneck towards the Brunx, stood opposed to the American centre.

On viewing Washington's situation, Howe, who accompanied


Kisco R.
North Castle
Chu.
Green
Heights
Pines Br.
Jewell
Morris
Qr. Mrs. Dickenson
Castle
North
Hate
Lane
Lewis
King Street
Wright
Rock
Clapp
School H.
Qr. Mr.
HARRISON'S PURCHASE
Grist M.
Purdy
Taylor
Davis
Oct. 29
WHITE PLAINS
Underhill
Heights of
Kipp
Buttermilk hill
Young Hamman
Ward
Chattertons
Hatfield
Ford
28
Lyons
Burtis
Road
Appleby
Beaver hill
Tarrytown
Mill R.
D.Chu.
Road to Albany
Croton R.
Croton Fer.
Haverstraw Bay
Teller's Pt.
TAPPAN SEA
Tappan Cr.



PLAN
of the Country from
FROGS POINT
TO CROTON RIVER
Shewing the Positions of the
American & British
Armies from
the 12th of Oct. 1776 until the
Engagement on the
WHITE PLAINS
on the 28th
Scale
1 ¾ ½ ¼ 0 1 2 3 4 Miles
Engraved by J. Yeager.
Rye
Mamaroneck R.
Mamaroneck
Suttens Pt
Sarsdale
Hunt
Ward
N. Rochelle
Heights of N. Rochelle
British camp Oct 21
Skirmish Oct. 13
E. Chester
Hutchesons R.
PELHAMS MANOR
Knyphausen Oct 22
Myers Pt
Oct 18
Pells Pt
Chester
Oct 12
Smith
Oct 19
March of the British Army to the
American Army from
Heights of Fordham
Philips
D. Church
Tetards Hill
Kings Br
Independence
Valentine
Dyckmans Br
Bronx R.
De Lancey
W. Chester
Morrisania
Harlem R.
Harlem
NEW YORK ISLAND
Fort Washington
Chevaux de Frise
Fort Lee
NORTH RIVER

Knyphausen, determined to carry the hill occupied by M'Dougal, as preliminary to an attack on the centre and right of the American camp. He therefore directed Colonel Rawle, with a brigade of Hessians, to cross the Brunx and make a circuit so as to turn M'Dougal's right flank, while Brigadier General Leslie, with a strong corps of British and Hessian troops should attack him in front. When Rawle had gained his position, the detachment commanded by Leslie also crossed the Brunx, and commenced a vigorous attack.[1] The militia in the front line immediately fled; but the regulars maintained their ground with great gallantry. Colonel Smallwood's regiment of Maryland, and Colonel Reitzimer's of New York, advanced boldly towards the foot of the hill to meet Leslie, but, after a sharp encounter, were overpowered by numbers, and compelled to retreat. General Leslie then attacked the remaining part of M'Dougal's forces, who were soon driven from the hill, but kept up for some time an irregular fire from the stone walls about the scene of action. General Putnam, with Beal's brigade, was ordered to support them; but not having arrived till the hill was lost, the attempt to regain it was deemed unadvisable, and the troops retreated to the main army.

In this animated engagement, the loss was supposed to be nearly equal. That of the Americans was between three and four hundred in killed, wounded, and taken. Colonel Smallwood was among the wounded.

General Washington continued in his lines expecting an assault. But a considerable part of the day having been exhausted in gaining the hill which had been occupied by M'Dougal, the meditated attempt on his intrenchments was postponed until the next morning; and the British army lay on their arms the following night, in order of battle, on the ground taken during the day.

This interval was employed by General Washington in strengthening his works, removing his sick and baggage, and preparing for the expected attack by adapting the arrangement of his troops to the existing state of things. His left maintained its position; but his right was drawn back to stronger ground.

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[1] General Howe's letter.

Perceiving this, and being unwilling to leave any thing to hazard, Howe resolved to postpone farther offensive operations, until Lord Percy should arrive with four battalions from New York, and two from Mamaraneck. This reinforcement was received on the evening of the thirtieth, and preparations were then made to force the American intrenchments the next morning. In the night, and during the early part of the succeeding day, a violent rain still farther postponed the assault.

Having now removed his provisions and heavy baggage to much stronger ground, and apprehending that the British general, whose left wing extended along the height, taken from M'Dougal, to his rear, might turn his camp, and occupy the strong ground to which he designed to retreat, should an attempt on his lines prove successful, General Washington changed his position in the night, and withdrew to the heights of North Castle, about five miles from the White Plains. Nov. 1.

Deeming this position too strong to be attempted with prudence, General Howe determined to change his plan of operations, and to give a new direction to his efforts.[1]

While forts Washington and Lee were held by the Americans, his movements were checked, and York Island insecure. With a view to the acquisition of these posts, he directed General Knyphausen to take possession of Kingsbridge, which was defended by a small party of Americans placed in fort Independence. On his approach, this party retreated to fort Washington; and Knyphausen encamped between that place and Kingsbridge.

In the mean time, General Howe retired slowly down the North river. His designs were immediately penetrated by the American general, who perceived the necessity of passing a part of his army into Jersey, but was restrained from immediately leaving the strong ground he occupied by the apprehension that his adversary might, in that event, return suddenly and gain his rear. Nov. 5. Nov. 6. A council of war was called, which determined unanimously, that, should General Howe continue his march towards New

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[1] General Howe's letter.

York, all the troops raised on the west side of the Hudson should cross that river, to be afterwards followed by those raised in the eastern part of the continent, leaving three thousand men for the defence of the Highlands about the North river.

In a letter to congress communicating this movement of the British army, and this determination of the council, the general said, "I can not indulge the idea that General Howe, supposing him to be going to New York, means to close the campaign, and to sit down without attempting something more. I think it highly probable, and almost certain, that he will make a descent with part of his troops into the Jerseys; and, as soon as I am satisfied that the present manœuvre is real, and not a feint, I shall use all the means in my power to forward a part of our force to counteract his designs.

"I expect the enemy will bend their force against fort Washington, and invest it immediately. From some advices, it is an object that will attract their earliest attention."

He also addressed a letter to the governor of New Jersey, expressing a decided opinion that General Howe would not content himself with investing fort Washington, but would invade the Jerseys; and urging him to put the militia in the best possible condition to reinforce the army, and to take the place of the new levies, who could not, he suggested, be depended on to continue in service one day longer than the first of December, the time for which they were engaged.

Immediate intelligence of this movement was likewise given to General Greene, who commanded in the Jerseys; and his attention was particularly pointed to fort Washington.

As the British army approached Kingsbridge, three ships of war passed up the North River, notwithstanding the fire from forts Washington and Lee, and notwithstanding the additional obstructions which had been placed in the channel.

On being informed of this, another letter was addressed to General Greene, stating that this fact was so plain a proof of the inefficacy of all the obstructions thrown in the river, Nov. 8. as to justify a change in the dispositions which had been made. "If," continued the letter, "we can not prevent vessels from passing up, and the enemy are possessed of the surrounding country, what valuable purpose can it answer to attempt to hold a post from which the expected benefit can not be derived? I am therefore inclined to think it will not be prudent to hazard the men and stores at Mount Washington; but as you are on the spot, I leave it to you to give such orders respecting the evacuation of the place, as you may think most advisable; and so far revoke the orders given to Colonel Magaw to defend it to the last."

Measures were now taken to cross the North River with the troops which had been raised on its western side, and General Washington determined to accompany that division of the army. The eastern regiments remained on the eastern side of the river, under the command of General Lee, with orders to join the Commander-in-chief, should the British army cross the Hudson.

After visiting the posts about Peekskill, and making all the arrangements in his power for their defence, General Washington passed the North River in the rear of the troops designed to act in the Jerseys, and proceeded to the quarters of General Greene, near fort Lee.

Nov. 13.

From too great a confidence[1] in the strength of fort Washington, and a conviction of its importance, General Greene had not withdrawn its garrison under the discretionary orders he had received, but still indulged a hope that the post might be maintained, or, should its situation become desperate, that means might be found to transport the troops across the river to the Jersey shore, which was defended by fort Lee.

Mount Washington is a high piece of rocky ground, near the North River, very difficult of ascent, especially towards the north, or Kingsbridge. The fort was capable of containing about one thousand men; but the lines and outworks, which were chiefly on the southern side, towards New York, were drawn quite across the island. The ground was naturally strong, the approaches difficult, and the fortifications, though not sufficient to resist heavy artillery, were believed to be in a condition to resist any attempt to carry them by storm. The garrison consisted of troops, some of whom were among the best in the American army; and the command had been given to Colonel Magaw, a brave and intelligent officer, in whom great confidence was placed.

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[1] Extract of a letter from General Greene, dated September 11th, 1778.

"Remember the effect that the loss of the garrison of fort Washington had; there were men enough to have defended themselves against all the army had they not been struck with a panic; but, being most of them irregular troops, they lost their confidence when the danger began to grow pressing, and fell a prey to their own fears." —*Life of Greene*, v. 1, p. 121.

General Howe, after retiring from the White Plains, encamped at a small distance from Kingsbridge, on the heights of Fordham; and, having made the necessary preparations for an assault, summoned the garrison to surrender, on pain of being put to the sword. Nov. 13. Nov. 15. Colonel Magaw replied, that he should defend the place to the last extremity, and communicated the summons to General Greene at fort Lee, who transmitted it to the Commander-in-chief, then at Hackensack. He immediately rode to fort Lee, and, though it was late in the night, was proceeding to fort Washington, where he expected to find Generals Putnam and Greene, when, in crossing the river, he met those officers returning from a visit to that fort. They reported that the garrison was in high spirits, and would make a good defence; on which he returned with them to fort Lee.

Early next morning, Colonel Magaw posted his troops, partly on a commanding hill north of the fort, partly in the outermost of the lines drawn across the island Nov. 16. on the south of the fort, and partly between those lines, on the woody and rocky heights fronting Haerlem River, where the ground being extremely difficult of ascent, the works were not closed. Colonel Rawlings, of Maryland, commanded on the hill towards Kingsbridge; Colonel Cadwallader, of Pennsylvania, in the lines, and Colonel Magaw himself continued in the fort.

The strength of the place had not deterred the British general from resolving to carry it by storm; and, on receiving the answer of Colonel Magaw, arrangements were made for a vigorous attack next day. About ten, the assailants appeared before the works, and moved to the assault in four different quarters. Their first division consisting of Hessians and Waldeckers, amounting to about five thousand men, under the command of General Knyphausen, advanced on the north side of the fort, against the hill occupied by Colonel Rawlings, who received them with great gallantry. The second, on the east, consisting of the British light infantry and guards, was led by Brigadier General Matthews, supported by Lord Cornwallis, at the head of the grenadiers and the thirty-third regiment. These troops crossed Haerlem River in boats, under cover of the artillery planted in the works, which had been erected on the opposite side of the river, and landed within the third line of defence which crossed the island. The third division was conducted by Lieutenant Colonel Stirling, who passed the river higher up; and the fourth by Lord Percy, accompanied by General Howe in person. This division was to attack the lines in front, on the south side.[1]

The attacks on the north and south by General Knyphausen and Lord Percy, were made about the same instant, on Colonels Rawlings and Cadwallader, who maintained their ground for a considerable time; but, while Colonel Cadwallader was engaged in the first line against Lord Percy, the second and third divisions which had crossed Haerlem River made good their landing, and dispersed the troops fronting that river, as well as a detachment sent by Colonel Cadwallader to support them. These being overpowered, and the British advancing between the fort and the lines, it became necessary to abandon them. In retreating to the fort, some of the men were intercepted by the division under Colonel Stirling, and made prisoners.

The resistance on the north was of longer duration. Rawlings maintained his ground with firmness, and his riflemen did vast execution. A three gun battery also played on Knyphausen with great effect. At length, the Hessian columns gained the summit of the hill; after which, Colonel Rawlings, who perceived the danger which threatened his rear, retreated under the guns of the fort.

Having carried the lines, and all the strong ground adjoining them, the British general again summoned Colonel Magaw to surrender. While the capitulation was in a course of arrangement, General Washington sent him a billet, requesting him to hold out until the evening, when means should be attempted to bring off the garrison. But Magaw had proceeded too far to retreat; and it is probable the place could not have resisted an assault from so formidable a force as threatened it. The greatest difficulties had been overcome; the fort was too small to contain all the men; and their ammunition was nearly exhausted. Under these circumstances the garrison became prisoners of war.

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[1] General Howe's letter.

The loss on this occasion was the greatest the Americans had ever sustained. The garrison was stated by General Washington at about two thousand men. Yet, in a report published as from General Howe, the number of prisoners is said to be two thousand and six hundred, exclusive of officers. Either General Howe must have included in his report persons who were not soldiers, or General Washington must have comprehended the regulars only in his letter. The last conjecture is most probably correct. The loss of the assailants, according to Mr. Stedman, amounted to eight hundred men. This loss fell heaviest on the Germans.

Nov. 18.

On the surrender of fort Washington, it was determined to evacuate fort Lee; and a removal of the stores was immediately commenced. Before this operation could be completed, a detachment commanded by Lord Cornwallis, amounting to about six thousand men, crossed the North River below Dobb's ferry, and endeavoured, by a rapid march, to enclose the garrison between the North and Hackensack Rivers. An immediate retreat from that narrow neck of land had become indispensable, and was with difficulty effected. All the heavy cannon at fort Lee, except two twelve pounders, with a considerable quantity of provisions and military stores, including three hundred tents were lost.

After crossing the Hackensack, General Washington posted his troops along the western bank of that river, but was unable to dispute its passage. At the head of about three thousand effectives, exposed, without tents, in an inclement season; he was in a level country, without a single intrenching tool, among people far from being zealous in the American cause. In other respects this situation was dangerous. The Passaic, in his rear, after running several miles nearly parallel to the Hackensack, unites with that river below the ground occupied by the

Americans, who were consequently still exposed to the hazard of being inclosed between two rivers.

This gloomy state of things was not brightened by the prospect before him. In casting his eyes around, no cheering object presented itself. No confidence could be placed on receiving reinforcements from any quarter. But, in no situation could Washington despond. His exertions to collect an army, and to impede the progress of his enemy, were perseveringly continued. Understanding that Sir Guy Carlton no longer threatened Ticonderoga, he directed General Schuyler to hasten the troops of Pennsylvania and Jersey to his assistance, and ordered[1] General Lee to cross the North River, and be in readiness to join him, should the enemy continue the campaign. Nov. 21. But, under the influence of the same fatal cause which had acted elsewhere, these armies too were melting away, and would soon be almost totally dissolved. General Mercer, who commanded a part of the flying camp stationed about Bergen, was also called in; but these troops had engaged to serve only till the 1st of December, and, like the other six months men, had already abandoned the army in great numbers. No hope existed of retaining the remnant after they should possess a legal right to be discharged; and there was not much probability of supplying their places with other militia. To New England he looked with anxious hope; and his requisitions on those states received prompt attention. Six thousand militia from Massachusetts, and a considerable body from Connecticut, were ordered to his assistance; but some delay in assembling them was unavoidable, and their march was arrested by the appearance of the enemy in their immediate neighbourhood.

Three thousand men, conducted by Sir Henry Clinton, who were embarked on board a fleet commanded by Sir Peter Parker, sailed late in November from New York, and, without much opposition took possession of Newport. This invasion excited serious alarm in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and these states retained for their own defence, the militia who had been embodied at the instance of the Commander-in-chief.

Not intending to maintain his present position, General Washington had placed some regiments along the Hackensack to afford the semblance of defending its passage until his stores could be removed; and, with the residue of the troops, crossed the Passaic, and took post at Newark. Soon after he had marched, Major General Vaughan appeared before the new bridge over Hackensack. The American detachment which had been left in the rear, being unable to defend it, broke it down, and retired before him over the Passaic.

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[1] See note No. VII at the end of the volume.

Having entered the open country, General Washington determined to halt a few days on the south side of this river, make some show of resistance, and endeavour to collect such a force as would keep up the semblance of an army. His letters, not having produced such exertions as the public exigencies required, he deputed General Mifflin to the government of Pennsylvania, and Colonel Reid, his Adjutant General, to the government of New Jersey, with orders to represent the real situation of the army, and the certainty that, without great reinforcements, Philadelphia must fall into the hands of the enemy, and the state of Jersey be overrun.

While thus endeavouring to strengthen himself with militia, he pressed General Lee to hasten his march, and cautioned him to keep high enough up the country to avoid the enemy, who, having got possession of the mail containing one of his late letters, would certainly endeavour to prevent the junction of the two armies.

This perilous state of things was rendered still more critical by indications of an insurrection in the county of Monmouth, in Jersey, where great numbers favoured the royal cause. In other places, too, a hostile temper was displayed, and an indisposition to farther resistance began to be manifested throughout that state. These appearances obliged him to make detachments from the militia of his army, to overawe the disaffected of Monmouth, who were on the point of assembling in force.

As the British army crossed the Passaic, General Washington abandoned his position behind that river; and the day Lord Cornwallis entered Newark, he retreated to Brunswick, a small village on the Raritan. Nov. 28.

At this place, the levies drawn from Maryland and Jersey

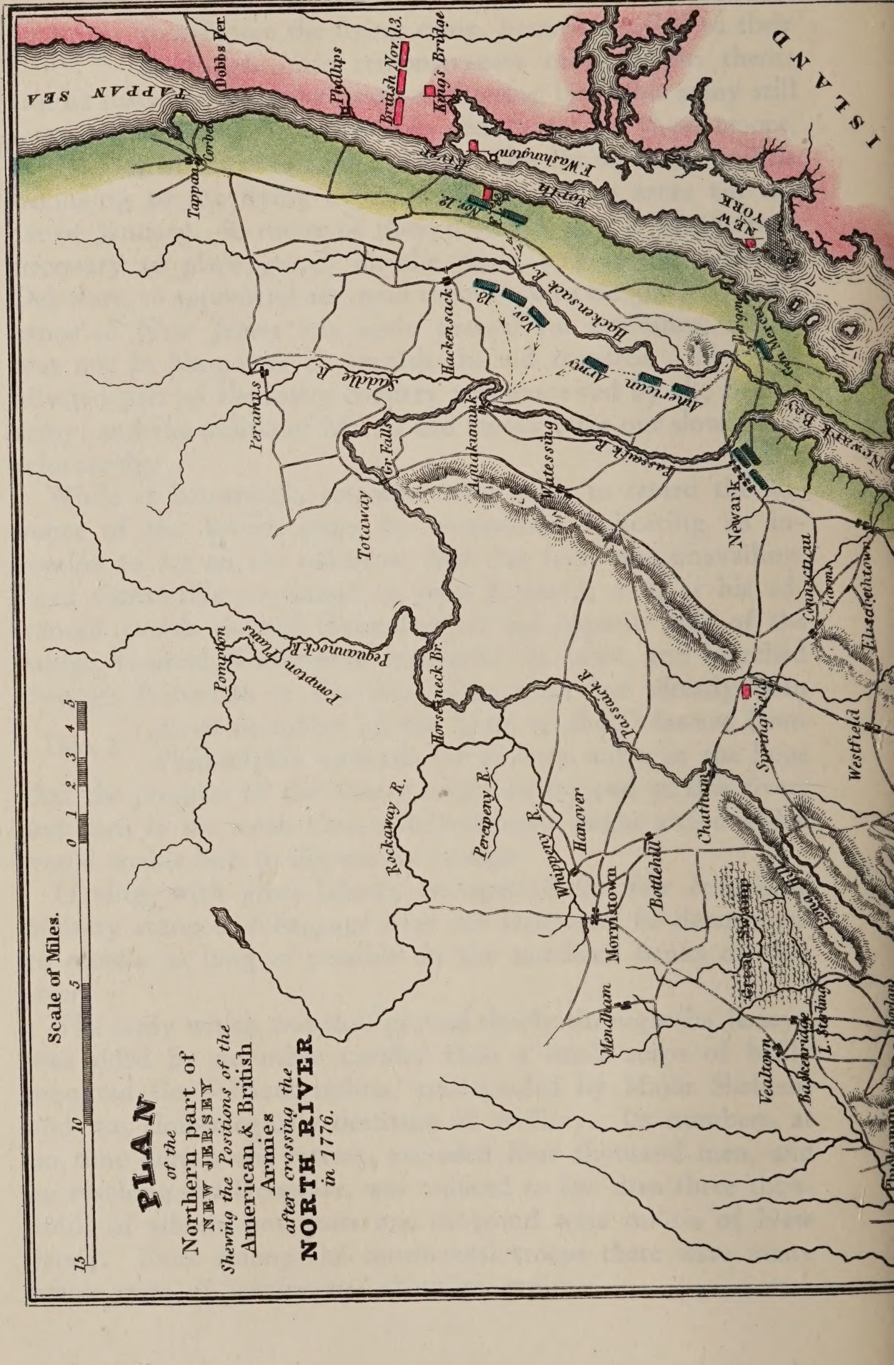
Dec. 1. to compose the flying camp, became entitled to their discharge. No remonstrances could detain them; and he sustained the mortification of seeing his feeble army still more enfeebled by being entirely abandoned by these troops, in the face of an advancing enemy. The Pennsylvania militia belonging to the flying camp were engaged to serve till the 1st of January. So many of them deserted, that it was deemed necessary to place guards on the roads, and ferries over the Delaware, to apprehend and send them back to camp. The Governor of New Jersey was again pressed for assistance, but it was not in his power to furnish the aid required. The well affected part of the lower country was overawed by the British army; and the militia of Morris and Sussex came out slowly and reluctantly.

While at Brunswick, attempts were made to retard the advance of the British army by movements indicating an intention to act on the offensive; but this feint was unavailing. Lord Cornwallis continued to press forward; and, as his advanced guards showed themselves on the opposite side of the bridge, General Washington evacuated the town, and marched through Princeton to Trenton. Directions had already been

Dec. 2. given to collect all the boats on the Delaware from Philadelphia upwards for seventy miles, in the hope that the progress of the enemy might be stopped at this river; and that, in the mean time, reinforcements might arrive which would enable him to dispute its passage.

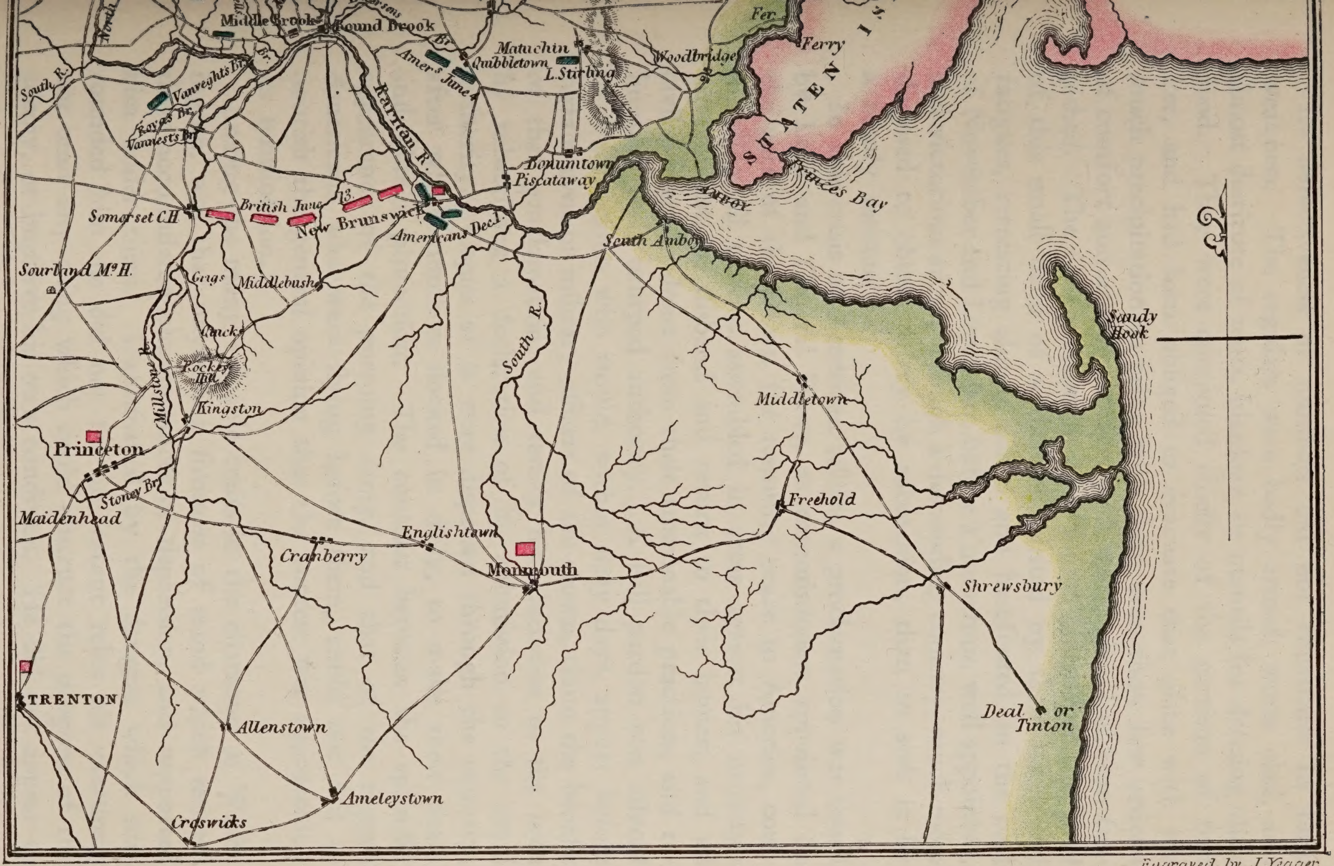
Having, with great labour, transported the few remaining military stores and baggage over the Delaware, he determined to remain as long as possible on the northern banks of that river.

The army which was thus pressed slowly through the Jerseys, was aided by no other cavalry than a small corps of badly mounted Connecticut militia, commanded by Major Shelden; and was almost equally destitute of artillery. Its numbers, at no time during the retreat, exceeded four thousand men, and on reaching the Delaware, was reduced to less than three thousand; of whom, not quite one thousand were militia of New Jersey. Even among the continental troops there were many whose term of service was about to expire.



PLAN
of the
Northern part of
NEW JERSEY
Shewing the Positions of the
American & British
Armies
after crossing the
NORTH RIVER
in 1776.

Scale of Miles.
15
10
5
0
1
2
3
4
5
TAPPAN SEA
Dobbs Fer.
Phillips
British Nov. 13.
King's Bridge
Tappan
North River
F. Washington
F. Lee
Nov. 18.
NEW YORK
ISLAND
Hackensack R.
Hackensack
Nov 18
American Army
Saddle R.
Peramus
Aquakanunk
Gr. Falls
Totaway
Watessing
Passaik R.
Newark
Bergen
Gen. Mercer
Newark Bay
Elizabethtown
Connecticut Farms
Springfield
Westfield
Passaick R.
Pequannock R.
Pompton R.
Pompton
Plains
Horseneck Br.
Rockaway R.
Percipeny R.
Whippeny R.
Hanover
Chatham
Bottlehill
Morristown
Mendham
Great Swamp
Long Hill
Vealtown
Baskenridge
L. Sterling


Middle Brook
Bound Brook
Br.
Matuchin
Quibbletown
L. Stirling
Woodbridge
Fer.
Ferry
STATEN IS.
Princes Bay
Amboy
South R.
Vanveghts Br.
Br.
Royes Br.
Vannests Br.
Amer.s June
Raritan R.
Bonumtown
Piscataway
Somerset C.H.
British June 13.
New Brunswick
Americans Dec.
South Amboy
Sourland M.t H.
Grigs
Middlebush
Hucks
Rocky Hill
Millstone R.
Kingston
South R.
Sandy Hook
Middletown
Princeton
Stoney Br.
Maidenhead
Freehold
Englishtown
Cranberry
Monmouth
Shrewsbury
TRENTON
Allenstown
Deal or Tinton
Ameleystown
Croswicks

Engraved by J Yeager

Its defectiveness of numbers did not constitute its only weakness. The regulars were badly armed, worse clad, and almost destitute of tents, blankets, or utensils for dressing their food. They were composed chiefly of the garrison of fort Lee, and had been obliged to evacuate that place with too much precipitation to bring with them even those few articles of comfort and accommodation with which they had been furnished. The Commander-in-chief found himself at the head of this small band of soldiers, dispirited by their losses and fatigues, retreating almost naked and barefooted, in the cold of November and December, before a numerous, well appointed, and victorious army, through a desponding country, much more disposed to obtain safety by submission, than to seek it by a manly resistance.

In this crisis of American affairs, a proclamation was issued by Lord and General Howe, as commissioners appointed on the part of the crown for restoring peace to America, commanding all persons assembled in arms against his majesty's government, to disband and return to their homes; and all civil officers to desist from their treasonable practices, and relinquish their usurped authority. A full pardon was offered to every person who would, within sixty days, appear before certain civil or military officers of the crown, claim the benefit of that proclamation, and testify his obedience to the laws by subscribing a declaration of his submission to the royal authority. Copies of it were dispersed through the country, after which numbers flocked in daily, to make their peace and obtain protection. The contrast between the splendid appearance of the pursuing army, and that of the ragged Americans who were flying before them, could not fail to nourish the general opinion that the contest was approaching its termination.

Among the many valuable traits in the character of Washington, was that unyielding firmness of mind which resisted these accumulated circumstances of depression, and supported him under them. Undismayed by the dangers which surrounded him, he did not for an instant relax his exertions, nor omit any thing which could obstruct the progress of the enemy, or improve his own condition. He did not appear to despair of the public safety, but struggled against adverse fortune with the hope of yet vanquishing the difficulties which surrounded him; and constantly showed himself to his harassed and enfeebled army, with a serene, unembarrassed countenance, betraying no fears in himself, and invigorating and inspiring with confidence the bosoms of others. To this unconquerable firmness, to this perfect self-possession under the most desperate circumstances, is America, in a great degree, indebted for her independence.

Dec. 6.

After removing his baggage and stores over the Delaware, and sending his sick to Philadelphia, the American General, finding that Lord Cornwallis still continued in Brunswick, detached twelve hundred men to Princeton in the hope that this appearance of advancing on the British might not only retard their progress, but cover a part of the country, and reanimate the people of Jersey.

Some portion of this short respite from laborious service was devoted to the predominant wish of his heart,—preparations for the next campaign,—by impressing on congress a conviction of the real causes of the present calamitous state of things. However the human mind may resist the clearest theoretic reasoning, it is scarcely possible not to discern obvious and radical errors, while smarting under their destructive consequences. The abandonment of the army by whole regiments of the flying camp, in the face of an advancing and superior enemy; the impracticability of calling out the militia of Jersey and Pennsylvania in sufficient force to prevent Lord Cornwallis from overrunning the first state, or restrain him from entering the last, had it not been saved by other causes, were practical lessons on the subjects of enlistments for a short time, and a reliance on militia, which no prejudice could disregard, and which could not fail to add great weight to the remonstrances formerly made by the Commander-in-chief, which were now repeated.

The exertions of General Mifflin to raise the militia of Pennsylvania, though unavailing in the country, were successful in Philadelphia. A large proportion of the inhabitants of that city capable of bearing arms, had associated for the general defence; and, on this occasion, fifteen hundred of them marched to Trenton; to which place a German battalion was also ordered by congress. On the arrival of these troops, Dec. 7. General Washington commenced his march to Princeton, but was stopped by the intelligence that Lord Cornwallis, having received large reinforcements, was advancing rapidly from Brunswick by different routes, and endeavouring to gain his rear.

On receiving this intelligence, he crossed the Delaware, and posted his army in such a manner as to guard the fords. Dec. 8. As his rear passed the river, the van of the British army appeared in sight. The main body took post at Trenton, and detachments were placed both above and below, while small parties, without interruption from the people of the country, reconnoitred the Delaware for a considerable distance. From Bordentown below Trenton the course of the river turns westward, and forms an acute angle with its course from Philadelphia to that place; so that Lord Cornwallis might cross a considerable distance above, and be not much, if any, farther from that city than the American army.

The British General made some unsuccessful attempts to seize a number of boats guarded by Lord Stirling, about Coryell's Ferry; and, in order to facilitate his movements down the river, on the Jersey shore, repaired the bridges below Trenton, which had been broken down by order of General Washington. He then advanced a strong detachment to Bordentown, giving indications of an intention to cross the Delaware at the same time above and below; and either to march in two columns to Philadelphia, or completely to envelop the American army in the angle of the river. To counteract this plan, the American General stationed a few gallies to watch the movements of his enemy below, and aid in repelling any effort to pass over to the Pennsylvania shore; and made such a disposition of his little army as to guard against any attempt to force a passage above, which he believed to be the real design.

Having made his arrangements, he waited anxiously for reinforcements; and, in the mean time, sent daily parties over the river to harass the enemy, and to observe his situation.

The utmost exertions were made by government to raise the militia. In the hope that a respectable body of continental troops would aid these exertions, General Washington had directed General Gates, with the regulars of the northern army, and General Heath, with those at Peekskill, to march to his assistance.

Although General Lee had been repeatedly urged to join the Commander-in-chief, he proceeded slowly in the execution of these orders, manifesting a strong disposition to retain his separate command, and rather to hang on, and threaten the rear of the British army, than to strengthen that in its front. With this view he proposed establishing himself at Morristown. On receiving a letter from General Washington disapproving this proposition, and urging him to hasten his march, Lee still avowed a preference for his own plan, and proceeded reluctantly towards the Delaware. While passing through Morris county, at the distance of twenty miles from the British encampment, he, very incautiously, quartered under a slight guard, in a house about three miles from his army. Information of this circumstance was given by a countryman to Colonel Harcourt, at that time detached with a body of cavalry to watch his movements, who immediately formed and executed the design of seizing him. Early in the morning of the 12th of December, this officer reached Lee's quarters, who received no intimation of his danger until the house was surrounded, and he found himself a prisoner. He was carried off in triumph to the British army, where he was, for some time, treated as a deserter from the British service.

This misfortune made a serious impression on all America. The confidence originally placed in General Lee had been increased by his success in the southern department, and by a belief that his opinions, during the military operations in New York, had contributed to the adoption of those judicious movements which had, in some measure, defeated the plans of General Howe in that quarter. It was also believed that he had dissented from the resolution of the council of war for maintaining forts Washington and Lee. No officer, except the Commander-in-chief, possessed, at that time, in so eminent a degree, the confidence of the army, or of the country; and his loss was, almost universally, bewailed as one of the greatest calamities which had befallen the American arms. It was regretted by no person more than by General Washington himself. He respected the merit of that eccentric veteran, and sincerely lamented his captivity.

General Sullivan, on whom the command of that division devolved after the capture of Lee, promptly obeyed the orders which had been directed to that officer; and, crossing the Delaware at Philipsburg, joined the Commander-in-chief. Dec. 20. On the same day General Gates arrived with a few northern troops. By these and other reinforcements, the army was augmented to about seven thousand effective men.

The attempts of the British general to get possession of boats for the transportation of his army over the Delaware having failed, he gave indications of an intention to close the campaign, and to retire into winter quarters. About four thousand men were cantoned on the Delaware at Trenton, Bordentown, the White Horse, and Mount Holly; and the remaining part of the army of Jersey was distributed from that river to the Hackensack. Strong corps were posted at Princeton, Brunswick, and Elizabethtown.

To intimidate the people, and thereby impede the recruiting service, was believed to be no inconsiderable inducement with General Howe, for covering so large a portion of Jersey. To counteract these views, General Washington ordered three of the regiments from Peekskill to halt at Morristown, and to unite with about eight hundred militia assembled at that place under Colonel Ford. General Maxwell was sent to take command of these troops, with orders to watch the motions of the enemy, to harass him in his marches, to give intelligence of all his movements, to keep up the spirits of the militia, and to prevent the inhabitants from going within the British lines, and taking protection.

The short interval between this cantonment of the British troops, and the recommencement of active operations, was employed by General Washington in repeating the representations he had so often made to congress, respecting preparations for the ensuing campaign. The dangers resulting from a reliance on temporary armies had been fully exemplified; and his remonstrances on that subject were supported by that severe experience which corrects while it chastises. In the course of the campaign, he had suffered greatly from the want of cavalry, of artillery, and of engineers. His ideas on these important subjects had been already stated to congress, and were now reurged. With respect to the additional expense to be incurred by the measures recommended, he observed, "that our funds were not the only object now to be taken into consideration. The enemy, it was found, were daily gathering strength from the disaffected. This strength, like a snow ball by rolling, would increase, unless some means should be devised to check effectually the progress of their arms. Militia might possibly do it for a little while; but in a little while also, the militia of those states which were frequently called upon would not turn out at all, or would turn out with so much reluctance and sloth, as to amount to the same thing. Instance New Jersey! Witness Pennsylvania! Could any thing but the river Delaware have saved Philadelphia?

"Could any thing," he asked, "be more destructive of the recruiting business than giving ten dollars bounty for six weeks service in the militia, who come in, you can not tell how; go, you can not tell when; and act, you can not tell where; who consume your provisions, exhaust your stores, and leave you at last in a critical moment.

"These, sir," he added, "are the men I am to depend upon ten days hence. This is the basis upon which your cause will rest, and must for ever depend, until you get a large standing army sufficient of itself to oppose the enemy."

He also hinted the idea, extremely delicate in itself, of enlarging his powers so as to enable him to act, without constant applications to congress for their sanction of measures, the immediate adoption of which was essential to the public interests. "This might," he said, "be termed an application for powers too dangerous to be trusted." He could only answer, "that desperate diseases required desperate remedies. He could with truth declare that he felt no lust for power, but wished with as much fervency as any man upon this wide extended continent, for an opportunity of turning the sword into a plough-share; but his feelings as an officer and a man had been such as to force him to say, that no person ever had a greater choice of difficulties to contend with than himself."

After recapitulating the measures he had adopted, which were not within his power, and urging many other necessary arrangements, he added, "it may be thought I am going a good deal out of the line of my duty to adopt these measures, or to advise thus freely. A character to lose; an estate to forfeit; the inestimable blessing of liberty at stake; and a life devoted, must be my excuse."

The present aspect of American affairs was gloomy in the extreme. The existing army, except a few regiments, affording an effective force of about fifteen hundred men, would dissolve in a few days. New Jersey had, in a great measure, submitted; and the militia of Pennsylvania had not displayed the alacrity expected from them. General Howe would, most probably, avail himself of the ice which would soon form, and of the dissolution of the American army, to pass the Delaware and seize Philadelphia. This event was dreaded, not only on account of its intrinsic importance, but of its peculiar effect at this time, when an army was to be recruited on which the future hopes of America were to rest. It was feared, and with reason, that it would make such an impression on the public mind as to deter the American youth from engaging in a contest becoming desperate.

Impelled by these considerations, General Washington meditated a blow on the British army, while dispersed in its cantonments, which might retrieve the affairs of America in the opinion of the public, and recover the ground that had been lost.

He formed the daring plan of attacking all the British posts on the Delaware at the same instant. If successful in all, or any of these attacks, he hoped not only to wipe off the impression made by his losses, and by his retreat, but also to relieve Philadelphia from immediate danger, and to compel his adversary to compress himself in such a manner as no longer to cover the Jerseys.

The positions taken to guard the river were equally well adapted to offensive operations.

The regulars were posted above Trenton from Yardley's up to Coryell's Ferry. The Pennsylvania flying camp, and Jersey militia, under the command of General Irvine, extended from Yardley's to the ferry opposite Bordentown; and General Cadwallader with the Pennsylvania militia lay still lower down the river.

In the plan of attack which had been digested, it was proposed to cross in the night at M'Konkey's Ferry, about nine miles above Trenton; to march down in two divisions, the one taking the river road, and the other the Pennington road, both which lead into the town; the first, towards that part of the western side which approaches the river, and the last towards the north. This part of the plan was to be executed by the General in person, at the head of about two thousand four hundred continental troops. It was thought practicable to pass them over the river by twelve, and to reach the point of destination by five in the morning of the next day, when the attack was to be made. General Irvine was directed to cross at the Trenton Ferry, and to secure the bridge below the town, in order to prevent the escape of the enemy by that road. General Cadwallader was to pass over at Dunk's Ferry, and carry the post at Mount Holly. It had been in contemplation to unite the troops employed in fortifying Philadelphia, to those at Bristol, and to place the whole under General Putnam; but such indications were given in that city of an insurrection of the royal cause, that this part of the plan was abandoned. The cold on the night of the 25th was very severe. Snow, mingled with hail and rain, fell in great quantities, and so much ice was made in the river that, with every possible exertion, the division conducted by the General in person could not effect its passage until three, nor commence its march down the river till near four. As the distance to Trenton by either road is nearly the same, orders were given to attack at the instant of arrival, and, after driving in the out-guards, to press rapidly after them into the town, and prevent the main body from forming.

Dec. 26.

General Washington accompanied the upper column, and arriving at the out-post on that road, precisely at eight, drove it in, and, in three minutes, heard the fire from the column which had taken the river road. The picket guard attempted to keep up a fire while retreating, but was pursued with such ardour as to be unable to make a stand. Colonel Rawle, who commanded in the town, paraded his men, and met the assailants. In the commencement of the action, he was mortally wounded, upon which the troops, in apparent confusion, attempted to gain the road to Princeton. General Washington threw a detachment into their front, while he advanced rapidly on them in person. Finding themselves surrounded, and their artillery already seized, they laid down their arms, and surrendered themselves prisoners of war. About twenty of the enemy were killed, and about one thousand made prisoners. Six field pieces, and a thousand stand of small arms were also taken. On the part of the Americans, two privates were killed; two frozen to death; and one officer, Lieutenant Monroe,[1] of the third Virginia regiment, and three or four privates wounded.

Unfortunately, the ice rendered it impracticable for General Irvine to execute that part of the plan which was allotted to him. With his utmost efforts, he was unable to cross the river; and the road towards Bordentown remained open. About five hundred men, among whom was a troop of cavalry, stationed in the lower end of Trenton, availed themselves of this circumstance, and crossing the bridge in the commencement of the action, escaped down the river. The same cause prevented General Cadwallader from attacking the post at Mount Holly. With great difficulty a part of his infantry passed the river, but returned on its being found absolutely impracticable to cross with the artillery.

Although this plan failed in so many of its parts, the success attending that which was conducted by General Washington in person was followed by the happiest effects.

Had it been practicable for the divisions under Generals Irvine and Cadwallader to cross the river, it was intended to proceed from Trenton to the posts at and about Bordentown, to sweep the British from the banks of the Delaware,[2] and to maintain a position in the Jerseys. But finding that those parts of the plan had failed, and supposing the British to remain in force below, while a strong corps was posted at Princeton, General Washington thought it unadvisable to hazard the loss of the very important advantage already gained, by attempting to increase it, and recrossed the river with his prisoners and military stores. Lieutenant Colonel Baylor, his aid-de-camp, who carried the intelligence of this success to congress, was presented with a horse completely caparisoned for service, and recommended to the command of a regiment of cavalry.

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[1] Since President of the United States.

[2] A fact has been stated to the author which shows to what an extent the plan might have been executed had it been possible to cross the river. Colonel Reed, who was with the division of Cadwallader, passed the ferry with the van of the infantry, and immediately despatched some trusty persons to examine the situation of the troops at Mount Holly. The report made by his messengers was, that they had looked into several houses in which the soldiers were quartered, and had found them generally fast asleep, under the influence, as was supposed, of the spirituous liquors they had drunk the preceding day, which was Christmas-day. That there appeared to be no apprehension of danger, nor precaution against it.

Nothing could surpass the astonishment of the British commander at this unexpected display of vigour on the part of the American General. His condition, and that of his country, had been thought desperate. He had been deserted by all the troops having a legal right to leave him; and, to render his situation completely ruinous, nearly two-thirds of the continental soldiers still remaining with him, would be entitled to their discharge on the first day of January. There appeared to be no probability of prevailing on them to continue longer in the service, and the recruiting business was absolutely at an end. The spirits of a large proportion of the people were sunk to the lowest point of depression. New Jersey appeared to be completely subdued; and some of the best judges of the public sentiment were of opinion that immense numbers in Pennsylvania, also, were determined not to permit the sixty days allowed in the proclamation of Lord and Sir William Howe, to elapse, without availing themselves of the pardon it proffered. Instead of offensive operations, the total dispersion of the small remnant of the American army was to be expected, since it would be rendered too feeble by the discharge of those engaged only until the last day of December, to attempt, any longer, the defence of the Delaware, which would by that time, in all probability, be passable on the ice. While every appearance supported these opinions, and the British General, without being sanguine, might well consider the war as approaching its termination, this bold and fortunate enterprise announced to him, that he was contending with an adversary who could never cease to be formidable while the possibility of resistance remained. Finding the conquest of America more distant than had been supposed, he determined, in the depth of winter to recommence active operations; and Lord Cornwallis, who had retired to New York with the intention of embarking for Europe, suspended his departure, and returned to the Jerseys in great force, for the purpose of regaining the ground which had been lost.

Meanwhile, Count Donop, who commanded the troops below Trenton, on hearing the disaster which had befallen Colonel Rawle, retreated by the road leading to Amboy, and joined General Leslie at Princeton. The next day, General Cadwallader crossed the Delaware, with orders to harass the enemy, but to put nothing to hazard until he should be joined by the continental battalions, who were allowed a day or two of repose, after the fatigues of the enterprise against Trenton. General Mifflin joined General Irvine with about fifteen hundred Pennsylvania militia, and those troops also crossed the river.

Finding himself once more at the head of a force with which it seemed practicable to act offensively, the General determined to employ the winter in endeavouring to recover Jersey.

With this view, he ordered General Heath to leave a small detachment at Peekskill, and with the main body of the New England militia, to enter Jersey, and approach the British cantonments on that side. General Maxwell was ordered, with all the militia he could collect, to harass their flank and rear, and to attack their out-posts on every favourable occasion, while the continental troops, led by himself, re-

Dec. 30.

crossed the Delaware, and took post at Trenton. On the last day of December, the regulars of New England were entitled to a discharge. With great difficulty, and a bounty of ten dollars, many of them were induced to renew their engagements for six weeks.

The British were now collected in force at Princeton under Lord Cornwallis; and appearances confirmed the intelligence, secretly[1] obtained, that he intended to attack the American army.

1777.
Jan. 1.

Generals Mifflin and Cadwallader, who lay at Bordentown and Crosswix, with three thousand six hundred militia, were therefore ordered to join the Commander-in-chief, whose whole effective force, with this addition, did not exceed five thousand men.

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[1] In this critical moment, when correct intelligence was so all important, Mr. Robert Morris raised on his private credit in Philadelphia, five hundred pounds in specie, which he transmitted to the Commander-in-chief, who employed it in procuring information not otherwise to have been obtained.

Lord Cornwallis advanced upon him the next morning; and about four in the afternoon, the van of the British army reached Trenton. On its approach, General Washington retired across the Assumpinck, a creek which runs through the town. The British attempted to cross the creek at several places, but finding all the fords guarded, they desisted from the attempt, and kindled their fires. The Americans kindled their fires likewise, and a cannonade was kept up on both sides till dark.

Jan. 2.

The situation of General Washington was again extremely critical. Should he maintain his position, he would certainly be attacked next morning, by a force so very superior, as to render the destruction of his little army inevitable. Should he attempt to retreat over the Delaware, the passage of that river had been rendered so difficult by a few mild and foggy days which had softened the ice, that a total defeat would be hazarded. In any event, the Jerseys would, once more, be entirely in possession of the enemy; the public mind again be depressed; recruiting discouraged; and Philadelphia, a second time, in the grasp of General Howe.

In this embarrassing state of things, he formed the bold design of abandoning the Delaware, and marching, by a circuitous route, along the left flank of the British army, into its rear, at Princeton, where its strength could not be great; and, after beating the troops at that place, to move rapidly to Brunswick, where the baggage and principal magazines of the army lay under a weak guard. He indulged the hope that this manœuvre would call the attention of the British general to his own defence. Should Lord Cornwallis, contrary to every reasonable calculation, proceed to Philadelphia, nothing worse could happen in that quarter, than must happen should the American army be driven before him; and some compensation for that calamity would be obtained by expelling the enemy completely from Jersey, and cutting up, in detail, all his parties in that state.

This plan being approved by a council of war, preparations were made for its immediate execution. As soon as it was dark, Jan. 3.

the baggage was removed silently to Burlington; and, about one in the morning, after renewing their fires, and leaving their guards to go the rounds as usual; the army decamped with perfect silence, and took a circuitous route along the Quaker road to Princeton, where three British regiments had encamped the preceding night, two of which commenced their march early in the morning to join the rear of their army at Maidenhead. At sunrise, when they had proceeded about two miles, they saw the Americans on their left, advancing in a direction which would enter the road in their rear. They immediately faced about, and, repassing Stony Brook, moved under cover of a copse of wood towards the American van, which was conducted by General Mercer. A sharp action ensued, which, however, was not of long duration. The militia, of which the advanced party was principally composed, soon gave way; and the few regulars attached to them were not strong enough to maintain their ground. While exerting himself gallantly to rally his broken troops, General Mercer was mortally wounded, and the van was entirely routed. But the fortune of the day was soon changed. The main body, led by General Washington in person, followed close in the rear, and attacked the British with great spirit. Persuaded that defeat would irretrievably ruin the affairs of America, he advanced in the very front of danger, and exposed himself to the hottest fire of the enemy. He was so well supported by the same troops who, a few days before, had saved their country at Trenton, that the British, in turn, were compelled to give way. Their line was broken, and the two regiments separated from each other. Colonel Mawhood, who commanded that in front, and was, consequently, nearest the rear division of the army, under Lord Cornwallis, retired to the main road, and continued his march to Maidenhead. The fifty-fifth regiment, which was on the left, being hard pressed, fled in confusion across the fields into a back road, leading between Hillsborough and Kingston towards Brunswick. The vicinity of the British forces at Maidenhead secured Colonel Mawhood, and General Washington pressed forward to Princeton. The regiment remaining in that place took post in the college, and made a show of resistance; but some pieces of artillery being brought up to play upon that building, it was abandoned, and the greater part of them became prisoners. A few saved themselves by a precipitate flight to Brunswick.

In this engagement, rather more than one hundred British were killed in the field, and near three hundred were taken prisoners. The loss of the Americans, in killed, was somewhat less, but in their number was included General Mercer, a valuable officer, who had served with the Commander-in-chief during his early campaigns in Virginia, and was greatly esteemed by him. Colonels Haslet and Potter, Captain Neal of the artillery, Captain Fleming and five other valuable officers, were also among the slain.

On the return of the day-light, Lord Cornwallis discovered that the American army had decamped in the night; and immediately conceived the whole plan. Alarmed at the danger which threatened Brunswick, he marched with the utmost expedition for that place, and was close in the rear of the American army before it could leave Princeton.

The situation of General Washington was again perilous in the extreme. His small army was exhausted with fatigue. His troops had been without sleep, all of them one night, and some of them, two. They were without blankets, many of them were bare-footed and otherwise thinly clad, and were eighteen miles from his place of destination. He was closely pursued by a superior enemy who must necessarily come up with him before he could accomplish his designs on Brunswick. Under these circumstances he abandoned the remaining part of his original plan, and took the road leading up the country to Pluckemin, where his troops were permitted to refresh themselves. Lord Cornwallis continued his march to Brunswick, which he reached in the course of that night.

The sufferings of the American soldiers had been so great from the severity of the season, and the very active service in which they had been engaged; their complaints, especially on the part of the militia, were so loud; their numbers were reducing so fast by returning home, and by sickness; that General Washington found it impracticable to continue offensive operations. He retired to Morristown, in order to put his men under cover, and to give them some repose.

The bold, judicious, and unexpected attacks made at Trenton and Princeton, had a much more extensive influence than would be supposed from a mere estimate of the killed and taken. They saved Philadelphia for the winter; recovered the state of Jersey; and, which was of still more importance, revived the drooping spirits of the people, and gave a perceptible impulse to the recruiting service throughout the United States.

The problem, that a nation can be defended against a permanent force, by temporary armies, by occasional calls of the husbandman from his plough to the field, was completely disproved; and, in demonstrating its fallacy, the independence of America had nearly perished in its cradle. The utmost efforts were now directed to the creation of an army for the ensuing campaign, as the only solid basis on which the hopes of the patriot could rest. During the retreat through the Jerseys, and while the expectation prevailed that no effectual resistance could be made to the British armies, some spirited men indeed were animated to greater and more determined exertions; but this state of things produced a very different effect on the great mass, which can alone furnish the solid force of armies. In the middle states especially, the panic of distrust was perceived. Doubts concerning the issue of the contest became extensive; and the recruiting service proceeded so heavily and slowly as to excite the most anxious solicitude for the future.

The affairs of Trenton and Princeton were magnified into great victories; and were believed by the body of the people to evidence the superiority of their army and of their general. The opinion that they were engaged in a hopeless contest, yielded to a confidence that proper exertions would ensure ultimate success.

This change of opinion was accompanied with an essential change of conduct; and, although the regiments required by congress were not completed, they were made much stronger than was believed to be possible before this happy revolution in the aspect of public affairs.

The firmness of congress throughout the gloomy and trying period which intervened between the loss of fort Washington and the battle of Princeton, gives the members of that time a just claim to the admiration of the world, and to the gratitude of their fellow citizens. Undismayed by impending dangers, they did not, for an instant, admit the idea of surrendering the independence they had declared, and purchasing peace by returning to their colonial situation. As the British army advanced through Jersey, and the consequent insecurity of Philadelphia rendered an adjournment from that place a necessary measure of precaution, their exertions seemed to increase with their difficulties. They sought to remove the despondence which was seizing and paralysing the public mind, by an address to the states, in which every argument was suggested which could rouse them to vigorous action. They made the most strenuous efforts to animate the militia, and impel them to the field, by the agency of those whose popular eloquence best fitted them for such a service.

When reassembled at Baltimore, the place to which they had adjourned, their resolutions exhibited no evidence of confusion or dismay; and the most judicious efforts were made to repair the mischief produced by past errors. 1776. Dec. 20. Declaring that, in the present state of things, the very existence of civil liberty depended on the right execution of military powers, to a vigorous direction of which, distant, numerous, and deliberative bodies were unequal, they authorised General Washington to raise sixteen additional regiments, and conferred upon him, for six months, almost unlimited powers for the conduct of the war.

Towards the close of 1776, while the tide of fortune was running strongest against them, some few members, distrusting their ability to make a successful resistance, proposed to authorise their commissioners at the court of Versailles to transfer to France the same monopoly of their trade which Great Britain had possessed.[1] This proposition is stated to have been relinquished, because it was believed that concessions of this kind would impair many arguments which had been used in favour of independence, and disunite the people. It was next proposed to offer a monopoly of certain enumerated articles; but the unequal operation of this measure gave to the proposition a speedy negative. Some proposed offering to France an offensive and defensive league; but this also was rejected. The more enlightened members argued that, though the friendship of small states might be purchased, that of France could not.

They alleged that, if she would risk a war with Great Britain by openly espousing their cause, she would not be induced to that measure by the prospect of direct advantages, so much as by a desire to lessen the overgrown power of a dangerous rival.[1] It was therefore urged that the most certain means of influencing France to interfere, was an assurance that the United States were determined to persevere in refusing to resume their former allegiance. Under the influence of this better opinion, resolutions were again entered into, directing their commissioners in Europe to give explicit assurances of their determination at all events to maintain their independence. Copies of these resolutions were sent to the principal courts of Europe; and agents were appointed to solicit their friendship to the new formed states.[2] These despatches fell into the hands of the British, and were published by them; a circumstance which promoted the views of congress, who were persuaded that an apprehension of their coming to an accommodation with Great Britain constituted a material objection to the interference of foreign courts, in what was represented as merely a domestic quarrel. A resolution adopted in the deepest distress, to listen to no terms of reunion with their parent state, would, it was believed, convince those who wished for the dismemberment of the British empire, that sound policy required their interference so far as to prevent the conquest of the United States.

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[1] Ramsay.

[2] Secret Journals of Congress, vol. ii. p. 38, and post.

CHAPTER VII

1777. January.

The effect of the proclamation published by Lord and General Howe on taking possession of New Jersey, was, in a great degree, counteracted by the conduct of the invading army. Fortunately for the United States, the hope that security was attainable by submission, was soon dissipated. Whatever may have been the exertions of their General to restrain his soldiers, they still considered and treated the inhabitants rather as conquered rebels than returning friends. Indulging in every species of licentiousness, the plunder and destruction of property were among the least offensive of the injuries they inflicted. The persons, not only of the men, but of that sex through which indignities least to be forgiven, and longest to be remembered, are received, were exposed to the most irritating outrage. Nor were these excesses confined to those who had been active in the American cause. The lukewarm, and even the loyalists, were the victims of this indiscriminating spirit of rapine and violence.

The effect of such proceedings on a people whose country had never before been the seat of war, and whose non-resistance had been occasioned solely by the expectation of that security which had been promised as the reward of submission to the royal authority, could not fail to equal the most sanguine hopes of the friends of the revolution. A sense of personal wrongs produced a temper which national considerations had proved too weak to excite; and, when the battles of Trenton and Princeton relieved the inhabitants from fears inspired by the presence of their invaders, the great body of the people flew to arms; and numbers who could not be brought into the field to check the advancing enemy, and prevent the ravages which uniformly afflict a country that becomes the seat of war, were prompt in avenging those ravages. Small bodies of militia scoured the country, seized on stragglers, behaved unexceptionably well in several slight skirmishes, and were collecting in such numbers as to threaten the weaker British posts with the fate which had befallen Trenton and Princeton.

To guard against that spirit of enterprise which his adversary had displayed to such advantage, General Howe determined to strengthen his posts by contracting them. The positions taken for the purpose of covering the country were abandoned; and the British force in New Jersey was collected at New Brunswick, on the Raritan, and at Amboy, a small town at the mouth of that river.

Feeble as was the American army, this movement was not effected without some loss. On the evacuation of Elizabethtown, General Maxwell attacked the British rear, and captured about seventy men with a part of their baggage.

The American troops had been so diminished by the extreme severity of the service, that it was with much difficulty the appearance of an army could be maintained. Fresh militia and volunteers arrived in camp, whose numbers were exaggerated by report. These additions to his small remaining regular force enabled the General to take different positions near the lines of the enemy, to harass him perpetually, restrain his foraging parties, and produce considerable distress in his camp.

Jan. 12.

While, with little more than an imaginary army, General Washington thus harassed and confined his adversary, he came to the hazardous resolution of freeing himself and his troops from the fear of a calamity which he found it impossible to elude, and which had proved more fatal in his camp than the sword of the enemy.

Inoculation having been rarely practised in the western world, the American youth remained liable to the small pox. Notwithstanding the efforts to guard against this disease, it had found its way into both the northern and middle army, and had impaired the strength of both to an alarming degree. To avoid the return of the same evil, the General determined to inoculate all the soldiers in the American service. With the utmost secrecy, preparations were made to give the infection in camp; and the hospital physicians in Philadelphia were ordered to carry all the southern troops, as they should arrive, through the disease. Similar orders were also given to the physicians at other places; and thus an army exempt from the fear of a calamity which had, at all times endangered the most important operations, was prepared for the ensuing campaign. This example was followed through the country; and this alarming disease was no longer the terror of America.

As the main body of the British army was cantoned in Jersey, and a strong detachment occupied Rhode Island, General Washington believed that New York could not be perfectly secure. His intelligence strengthened this opinion; and, as an army, respectable in point of numbers, had been assembled about Peekskill, he ordered General Heath to approach New York for the purpose of foraging, and, should appearances favour the attempt, of attacking the forts which guarded the entrance into the island. The hope was entertained that General Howe, alarmed for New York, might either withdraw his troops from Jersey, or so weaken his posts in that state as to endanger them. Should this hope be disappointed, it was believed that something handsome might be done, either on York or Long Island.

In pursuance of this plan, General Heath marched down to West Chester, and summoned fort Independence to surrender; but, the garrison determining to hold the place, a council of war deemed it unadvisable to risk an assault. An embarkation of troops which took place about that time, at Rhode Island, alarmed General Heath for his rear, and induced him to resume his ground in the Highlands.

Though this attempt entirely failed, the Commander-in-chief still meditated important operations during the winter. All the intelligence from Europe demonstrated the necessity of these operations, and the fallacy of the hope, still extensively cherished that the war would be abandoned by Great Britain. The administration was still supported by great majorities in parliament; and the nation seemed well disposed to employ all its means to reannex to the empire, what were still denominated, revolted colonies. It was not to be doubted that large reinforcements would arrive in the spring; and the safety of the nation would be in hazard should General Howe remain in full force till they should be received. The utmost efforts were made by the Commander-in-chief to collect a sufficient number of troops to enable him to give a decisive blow to some one of the positions of his enemy. The state sovereignties, where the real energies of government resided, were incessantly urged to fill their regiments, and to bring their quotas into the field, and congress, at his instance, passed resolutions authorizing him to draw the troops from Peekskill and to call out the militia of the neighbouring states. "It being," these resolutions proceed to say, "the earnest desire of congress, to make the army under the immediate command of General Washington sufficiently strong, not only to curb and confine the enemy within their present quarters, and prevent their drawing support of any kind from the country, but, by the divine blessing, totally to subdue them before they can be reinforced."

These resolves were communicated to the general, in a letter, manifesting the confident expectation of congress that the desire expressed in them would soon be realized. But the energy displayed in their passage, could not be maintained in their execution.

Many causes concurred to prevent the collection of a force competent to those vigorous operations which the enterprising genius of the Commander-in-chief had provisionally planned, and the sanguine temper of congress had anticipated. Some of the state assemblies did not even complete the appointment of officers till the spring; and then, bitter contests concerning rank remained to be adjusted when the troops should join the army. After these arrangements were made, the difficulty of enlisting men was unexpectedly great. The immense hardships to which the naked soldiers had been exposed, during a winter campaign, in the face of a superior enemy; the mortality resulting from those hardships, and probably from an injudicious arrangement of the hospital department which was found to be the tomb of the sick; had excited a general disgust to the service; and a consequent unwillingness to engage in it.

From these causes the army continued so feeble that the general, instead of being able to execute the great designs he had meditated entertained serious fears that Sir William Howe would take the field during the winter, force his positions, cross the Delaware on the ice, and proceed to Philadelphia. In the apprehension of this attempt, and to avoid that confusion which would result from the removal of stores in the crisis of military operations, he had taken the precaution, as soon as the armies were in winter quarters, to convey those which were most valuable to a distance from the route which it was supposed the British army would pursue.

The real condition of the army is exhibited in a letter from the Commander-in-chief to congress, in answer to that which enclosed the resolutions already mentioned, and which expressed the brilliant schemes of victory formed by the government.

March 4. "Could I," said the general, "accomplish the important objects so eagerly wished by congress; confining the enemy within their present quarters, preventing their getting supplies from the country, and totally subduing them before they are reinforced, I should be happy indeed. But what prospect or hope can there be of my effecting so desirable a work at this time? The enclosed return,[1] to which I solicit the most serious attention of congress comprehends the whole force I have in Jersey. It is but a handful, and bears no proportion on the scale of numbers to that of the enemy. Added to this, the major part is made up of militia. The most sanguine in speculation can not deem it more than adequate to the least valuable purposes of war."

Though unable to act with the vigour he wished, the American general kept up a war of skirmishes through the winter. In the course of it, the British loss was believed to be considerable; and hopes were entertained that, from the scarcity of forage, neither their cavalry nor draft horses would be in a condition to take the field when the campaign should open. Their foraging parties were often attacked to advantage. Frequent small successes, the details of which filled the papers throughout the United States, not only increased the confidence of the American soldiers, but served greatly to animate the people.

The hope of collecting a sufficient force during the winter to make any valuable impression on the British army being disappointed, the views of the General were directed to the next campaign.

As the new army was to be raised by the authority of the state governments, he urged on them the necessity of bringing a respectable force into the field early in the spring, with all the earnestness which was suggested by his situation, and zeal for the service.

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[1] See note No. VIII at the end of the volume.

In Connecticut and Massachusetts, the country was laid off into districts, each of which was required, by a given day, to furnish a soldier enlisted for three years, or during the war; in default of which, one person, from those capable of bearing arms, was to be drafted to serve until the first of the ensuing January. The Commander-in-chief, though still deprecating the introduction of men into the army whose terms of service would be of short duration, felt the necessity of submitting to this expedient, as the most eligible which could now be adopted.

In Virginia, where the same difficulty attended enlistments, it was proposed by the executive to fill the regiments with volunteers, who should engage to serve for six months. This plan was submitted to General Washington by Governor Henry, and his opinion asked upon it. "I am under the necessity of observing," said the General in reply, "that the volunteer plan which you mention will never answer any valuable purpose, and that I can not but disapprove the measure. To the short engagements of our troops may be fairly and justly ascribed almost every misfortune that we have experienced."

In a subsequent letter to the same gentleman, enforcing earnestly the necessity of bringing a sufficient army into the field, though coercive measures should be adopted, some alternatives were suggested, which, in a later period of the war, constituted the basis of various experiments to furnish the quota of troops required from that state.

As the season for active operations approached, fresh difficulties, growing out of the organization of the American system, unfolded themselves. As every state was exposed to invasion, and the command of the ocean enabled the British general to transfer the war, at pleasure, to any part of the Union, the attention of each was directed exclusively to its particular situation. Each state in the neighbourhood of the great theatre of action, contemplating its own danger, claimed the protection which is due from the whole to its parts. Although the object of the confederation was the same with that pursued by each of its members, the spirit incident to every league could not be controlled in an empire where, notwithstanding the existence of a head, the essentials of government resided in the members. It was displayed in repeated efforts to give to the energies of the army such various directions, as would leave it unable to effect any great object, or to obstruct any one plan the enemy might form. The patriotism of the day however, and the unexampled confidence placed by all the state governments in the Commander-in-chief, prevented the mischiefs this spirit is so well calculated to generate. His representations made their proper impression; and the intention of retaining continental troops for local defence was abandoned, though with some reluctance. The burthen, however, of calling militia from their domestic avocations, at every threat of invasion, to watch every military post in each state, became so intolerable, that the people cast about for other expedients to relieve themselves from its weight. The plan of raising regular corps, to be exclusively under state authority, and thus be a perpetual substitute for the yeomanry of the country, presented itself as the most effectual and convenient mode of protecting the coasts from insult.

During the winter, General Howe kept his troops in their quarters, attending to their comfort. As the season for more active operations approached, his first attention was directed to the destruction of the scanty supplies prepared by the Americans for the ensuing campaign. A small place on the Hudson called Peekskill, about fifty miles above New York, was generally the residence of the officer commanding in the Highlands, and was used for the reception of stores, to be distributed into the neighbouring posts as occasion might require. Its strength, like that of all others depending for defence on militia, was subject to great fluctuation. As soon as the ice was out of the river, General Howe took advantage of its occasional weakness, to carry on an expedition against it, for the purpose of destroying the stores there deposited, or of bringing them away.

Colonel Bird was detached up the river on this service, with about five hundred men, under convoy of a frigate and some armed vessels. General M'Dougal, whose numbers did not at that time exceed two hundred and fifty men, March 31.

received timely notice of his approach, and exerted himself for the removal of the stores into the strong country in his rear. Before this could be effected, Colonel Bird appeared; and M'Dougal, after setting fire to the remaining stores and barracks, retired into the strong grounds in the rear of Peekskill. The British detachment completed the conflagration, and returned to New York. During their short stay, a piquet guard was attacked by Colonel Willet, and driven in with the loss of a few men; a circumstance, believed by General M'Dougal, to have hastened the re-embarkation of the detachment.

Military stores to a considerable amount had likewise been deposited at Danbury, on the western frontier of Connecticut. Although this place is not more than twenty miles from the Sound, yet the roughness of the intervening country, the frequent passage of troops from the eastward through the town, and the well known zeal of the neighbouring militia, were believed sufficient to secure the magazines collected at it. Against Danbury an expedition was projected; and two thousand men under the command of Governor Tryon, major general of the provincials in the British service, assisted by Brigadiers Agnew and Sir William Erskine, were employed in it.

On the 25th of April the fleet appeared off the coast of Connecticut and in the evening the troops were landed without opposition between Fairfield and Norwalk. General Silliman, then casually in that part of the country, immediately despatched expresses to assemble the militia. In the mean time Tryon proceeded to Danbury, which he reached about two the next day. On his approach, Colonel Huntingdon who had occupied the town with about one hundred and fifty men, retired to a neighbouring height, and Danbury, with the magazines it contained, was consumed by fire. General Arnold, who was also in the state superintending the recruiting service, joined General Silliman at Reading, where that officer had collected about five hundred militia. General Wooster, who had resigned his commission in the continental service, and been appointed major general of the militia, fell in with them at the same place, and they proceeded in the night through a heavy rain to Bethel, about eight miles from Danbury. Having heard next morning that Tryon, after destroying the town and magazines, was returning, they divided their troops; and General Wooster, with about three hundred men fell in his rear, while Arnold, with about five hundred, crossing the country, took post in his front at Ridgefield. Wooster came up with his rear about eleven in the morning, attacked it with great gallantry, and a sharp skirmish ensued, in which he was mortally wounded,[1] and his troops were repulsed. Tryon then proceeded to Ridgefield, where he found Arnold already intrenched on a strong piece of ground, and prepared to dispute his passage. A warm skirmish ensued, which continued nearly an hour. Arnold was at length driven from the field; after which he retreated to Paugatuck, about three miles east of Norwalk. At break of day next morning, after setting Ridgefield on fire, the British resumed their march. About eleven in the forenoon, they were again met by Arnold, whose numbers increased during the day to rather more than one thousand men; among whom were some continental troops. A continued skirmishing was kept up until five in the afternoon, when the British formed on a hill near their ships. The Americans attacked them with intrepidity, but were repulsed and broken. Tryon, availing himself of this respite, re-embarked his troops, and returned to New York.

The loss of the British amounted to about one hundred and seventy men. That of the Americans, was represented by Tryon, as being much more considerable. By themselves, it was not admitted to exceed one hundred. In this number, however, were comprehended General Wooster, Lieutenant Colonel Gould, and another field officer, killed; and Colonel Lamb wounded. Several other officers and volunteers were killed.

Military and hospital stores to a considerable amount, which were greatly needed by the army, were destroyed in the magazines at Danbury; but the loss most severely felt was rather more than one thousand tents, which had been provided for the campaign about to open.

Not long afterwards this enterprise was successfully retaliated. A British detachment had been for some time employed in collecting forage and provisions on the eastern end of Long Island. Howe supposed this part of the country to be so completely secure by the armed vessels which incessantly traversed the Sound, that he confided the protection of the stores, deposited at a small port called Sagg Harbour, to a schooner with twelve guns, and a company of infantry.

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[1] Congress voted a monument to his memory.

General Parsons, who commanded a few recruits at New Haven, thinking it practicable to elude the cruisers in the bay, formed the design of surprising this party, and other adjacent posts, the execution of which was entrusted to Lieutenant Colonel Meigs, a gallant officer, who had accompanied Arnold in his memorable march to Quebec. He embarked with about two hundred and thirty men, on board thirteen whale boats, and proceeded along the coast of Guilford, where he was to cross the Sound. With about one hundred and seventy of his detachment, under convoy of two armed sloops, he proceeded across the Sound to the north division of the island near South Hold, in the neighbourhood of which a small foraging party, against which the expedition was in part directed, was supposed to lie; but they had marched two days before to New York. The boats were conveyed across the land, a distance of about fifteen miles, into a bay which deeply intersects the eastern end of Long Island, where the troops re-embarked. Crossing the bay, they landed at two in the morning, about four miles from Sagg Harbour, which place they completely surprised, and carried with charged bayonets. At the same time, a division of the detachment secured the armed schooner, and the vessels laden with forage, which were set on fire, and entirely consumed. Six of the enemy were killed, and ninety taken prisoners. A very few escaped under cover of the night.

May 23.

The object of his expedition being effected without the loss of a man, Colonel Meigs returned to Guilford with his prisoners. "Having," as was stated in the letter to General Parsons, "moved with such uncommon celerity, as to have transported his men, by land and water, ninety miles in twenty-five hours." Congress directed a sword to be presented to him, and passed a resolution expressing the high sense entertained of his merit, and of the prudence, activity, and valour, displayed by himself and his party.

The exertions made by the Commander-in-chief through the winter to raise a powerful army for the ensuing campaign, had not been successful. The hopes respecting its strength which the flattering reports made from every quarter had authorised him to form, were cruelly disappointed; and he found himself not only unable to carry into effect the offensive operations he had meditated, but unequal even to defensive war. That steady and persevering courage, however, which had supported himself and the American cause through the gloomy scenes of the preceding year, did not forsake him; and that sound judgment which applies to the best advantage those means which are attainable, however inadequate they may be, still remained. His plan of operations was adapted to that which he believed his enemy had formed. He was persuaded either that General Burgoyne would endeavour to take Ticonderoga, and to penetrate to the Hudson, in which event General Howe would co-operate with him by moving up that river, and attempting to possess himself of the forts and high grounds commanding its passage; or that Burgoyne would join the grand army at New York by sea; after which the combined armies would proceed against Philadelphia.

To counteract the designs of the enemy, whatever they might be, to defend the three great points, Ticonderoga, the Highlands of New York, and Philadelphia, against two powerful armies so much superior to him, in arms, in numbers, and in discipline, it was necessary to make such an arrangement of his troops as would enable the parts reciprocally to aid each other, without neglecting objects of great, and almost equal magnitude which were alike threatened, and were far asunder. To effect these purposes, the troops of New England and New York were divided between Ticonderoga and Peekskill, while those from Jersey to North Carolina inclusive, were directed to assemble at the camp to be formed in Jersey. The more southern troops remained in that weak quarter of the union for its protection.

These arrangements being made, and the recruits collected, the camp at Morristown was broken up, the detachments called in, and the army assembled at Middlebrook, just behind a connected ridge of strong and command- May 28.

ing heights. north of the road leading to Philadelphia, and about ten miles from Brunswick.

This camp, the approaches to which were naturally difficult, was rendered still more defensible by intrenchments. The heights in front commanded a prospect of the course of the Raritan, the road to Philadelphia, the hills about Brunswick, and a considerable part of the country between that place and Amboy; so as to afford a full view of the most interesting movements of the enemy.

The force brought into the field by America required all the aid which could be derived from strong positions, and unremitting vigilance. On the 20th of May, the total of the army in Jersey, excluding cavalry and artillery, amounted to only eight thousand three hundred and seventy-eight men, of whom upwards of two thousand were sick. The effective rank and file were only five thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight.

Had this army been composed of the best disciplined troops, its inferiority, in point of numbers, must have limited its operations to defensive war; and have rendered it incompetent to the protection of any place, whose defence would require a battle in the open field. But more than half the troops [1] were unacquainted with the first rudiments of military duty, and had never looked an enemy in the face. As an additional cause of apprehension, a large proportion of the soldiers, especially from the middle states, were foreigners, many of them servants, in whose attachment to the American cause full confidence could not be placed.

General Washington anticipating a movement by land towards Philadelphia, had taken the precaution to give orders for assembling on the western bank of the Delaware, an army of militia, strengthened by a few continental troops, the command of which was given to General Arnold, who was then in Philadelphia, employed in the settlement of his accounts.

The first and real object of the campaign, on the part of General Howe, was the acquisition of Philadelphia. He intended to march through Jersey; and, after securing the submission of that state, to cross the Delaware on a portable bridge constructed in the winter for the purpose, and proceed by land to that city. If, in the execution of this plan, the Americans could be brought to a general action on equal ground, the advantages of the royal army must insure a victory. But should Washington decline an engagement, and be again pressed over the Delaware, the object would be as certainly obtained.

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[1] The extreme severity of the service, aided perhaps by the state of the hospitals, had carried to the grave more than two-thirds of the soldiers who had served the preceding campaign, and been engaged for more than one year.

Had Sir William Howe taken the field before the continental troops were assembled, this plan might probably have been executed without any serious obstruction; but the tents and camp equipage expected from Europe did not arrive until General Washington had collected his forces, and taken possession of the strong post on the heights of Middlebrook. It would be dangerous to attack him on such advantageous ground; for, although his camp might be forced, victory would probably be attended with such loss, as to disable the victor from reaping its fruits.

If it was deemed too hazardous to attack the strong camp at Middlebrook; an attempt to cross the Delaware, in the face of an army collected on its western bank, while that under General Washington remained unbroken in his rear, was an experiment of equal danger. It comported with the cautious temper of Sir William Howe to devise some other plan of operation to which he might resort, should he be unable to seduce the American general from his advantageous position.

The two great bays of Delaware and Chesapeake suggested the alternative of proceeding by water, should he be unable to manœuvre General Washington out of his present encampment.

The plan of the campaign being settled, and some small reinforcements with the expected camp equipage being received from Europe, General Howe, leaving a garrison in New York, and a guard in Amboy, assembled his army at Brunswick, and gave strong indications of an intention to penetrate through the country to the Delaware, and reach Philadelphia by land.

June.

June 12.

Believing this to be his real design, Washington placed a select corps of riflemen under the command of Colonel Morgan, an officer who had distinguished himself in the unfortunate attempt to storm Quebec, and in whom those

June 13.

peculiar qualities which fit a man for the command of a partisan corps, designed to act on the lines of a formidable enemy, were eminently united.

He was ordered to take post at Vanvighton's Bridge on the Raritan, just above its confluence with the Millstone River, to watch the left flank of the British army, and seize every occasion to harass it.

Early in the morning of the 14th, Sir William Howe, leaving two thousand men under the command of General Matthews at Brunswick, advanced in two columns towards the Delaware. The front of the first, under Lord Cornwallis, reached Somerset Court House, nine miles from Brunswick, by the appearance of day; and the second, commanded by General de Heister, reached Middlebush about the same time.

This movement was made with the view of inducing General Washington to quit his fortified camp, and approach the Delaware,[1] in which event, the British General expected to bring on an engagement on ground less disadvantageous than that now occupied by the American army. But the officer understood the importance of his position too well to abandon it. On the first intelligence that the enemy was in motion, he drew out his whole army, and formed it, to great advantage, on the heights in front of his camp. This position was constantly maintained. The troops remained in order of battle during the day; and, in the night, slept on the ground to be defended. In the mean time the Jersey militia, with an alacrity theretofore unexampled in that state, took the field in great numbers. They principally joined General Sullivan, who had retired from Princeton, behind the Sourland hills towards Flemingtown, where an army of some respectability was forming, which could readily co-operate with that under the immediate inspection of the Commander-in-chief.

The settled purpose of General Washington was to defend his camp, but not to hazard a general action on other ground. He had therefore determined not to advance from the heights he occupied, into the open country, either towards the enemy, or the Delaware.

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[1] General Howe's letter.

The object of General Howe seems to have been, by acting on his anxiety for Philadelphia, to seduce him from the strong ground about Middlebrook, and tempt him to approach the Delaware, in the hope of defending its passage. Should he succeed in this, he had little doubt of being able to bring on an engagement, in which he counted with certainty on victory. The considerations which restrained General Howe from attempting to march through Jersey, leaving the American army in full force in his rear, had determined Washington to allow him to proceed to the Delaware, if such should be his intention. In that event, he had determined to throw those impediments only in the way of the hostile army which might harass and retard its march; and, maintaining the high and secure grounds north of the road to be taken by the enemy, to watch for an opportunity of striking some important blow with manifest advantage.

He was not long in penetrating the designs of his adversary. "The views of the enemy," he writes to General Arnold in a letter of the 17th, "must be to destroy this army, and get possession of Philadelphia. I am, however, clearly of opinion, that they will not move that way until they have endeavoured to give a severe blow to this army. The risk would be too great to attempt to cross a river, when they must expect to meet a formidable opposition in front, and would have such a force as ours in their rear. They might possibly be successful, but the probability would be infinitely against them. Should they be imprudent enough to make the attempt, I shall keep close upon their heels, and will do every thing in my power to make the project fatal to them.

"But, besides the argument in favour of their intending, in the first place, a stroke at this army, drawn from the policy of the measure, every appearance contributes to confirm the opinion. Had their design been for the Delaware in the first instance, they would probably have made a secret, rapid march for it, and not have halted so as to awaken our attention, and give us time to prepare for obstructing them. Instead of that they have only advanced to a position necessary to facilitate an attack on our right, the part in which we are most exposed. In addition to this circumstance, they have come out as light as possible, leaving all their baggage, provisions, boats, and bridges, at Brunswick. This plainly contradicts the idea of their intending to push for the Delaware."

Finding the American army could not be drawn from its strong position, General Howe determined to waste no more time in threatening Philadelphia by land, but to withdraw from Jersey, and to embark his army as expeditiously as possible for the Chesapeake or the Delaware. On the night of the 19th he returned to Brunswick, and on the 22d to Amboy, from which place, the heavy baggage and a few of his troops passed into Staten Island, on the bridge which had been designed for the Delaware.

General Washington had expected this movement from Brunswick, and had made arrangements to derive some advantage from it. General Greene was detached with three brigades to annoy the British rear; and Sullivan and Maxwell were ordered to co-operate with him. In the mean time the army paraded on the heights of Middlebrook, ready to act as circumstances might require.

About sunrise, Colonel Morgan drove in a piquet guard, soon after which that division commenced its march to Amboy. Some sharp skirmishing took place between this party and Morgan's regiment, but the hope of gaining any important advantage was entirely disappointed; and the retreat to Amboy was effected with inconsiderable loss.

In order to cover his light parties, which still hung on the British flank and rear, General Washington advanced six or seven miles, to Quibbletown on the road to Amboy; and Lord Stirling's division was pushed still farther, to the neighbourhood of the Metucking Meeting House, for the purpose of co-operating with the light parties, should the retreat to Staten Island afford an opportunity of striking at the rear.

June 24.

Believing it now practicable to bring on an engagement, and probably hoping to turn left of the American army, and gain the heights in its rear, General Howe, in the night of the 25th, recalled the troops from Staten Island; and, early next morning, made a rapid movement, in two columns, towards Westfield. The right, under the command of Lord Cornwallis, took the route by Woodbridge to the Scotch Plains; and the left, June 26. led by Sir William Howe in person, marched by Metucking Meeting House, to fall into the rear of the right column. It was intended that the left should take a separate road, soon after this junction, and attack the left flank of the American army at Quibbletown; while Lord Cornwallis should gain the heights on the left of the camp at Middlebrook. Four battalions with six pieces of cannon were detached to Bonhamtown.[1]

About Woodbridge, the right column fell in with one of the American parties of observation which gave notice of this movement. General Washington discerned his danger, put the whole army instantly in motion, and regained the camp at Middlebrook. Lord Cornwallis fell in with Lord Stirling, and a sharp skirmish ensued, in which the Americans were driven from their ground with the loss of three field pieces, and a few men. They retreated to the hills about the Scotch plains, and were pursued as far as Westfield. Perceiving the passes in the mountains on the left of the American camp to be guarded, and the object of this skilful manœuvre to be, June 30. consequently, unattainable, his lordship returned through Rahway to Amboy; and the whole army crossed over to Staten Island.

General Washington was now again left to his conjectures respecting the plan of the campaign. Before Sir William Howe July 2. had, in any degree disclosed his views, intelligence was received of the appearance of Burgoyne on Lake Champlain, and that Ticonderoga was threatened. This intelligence strengthened the opinion that the design of Howe must be to seize the passes in the mountains on the Hudson, secure the command of that river, and effect a junction between the two armies. Yet he could not permit himself to yield so entirely to this impression, as to make a movement which might open the way by land to Philadelphia. His army therefore maintained its station at Middlebrook; but arrangements were made to repel any sudden attack on the posts which defended the Hudson.

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[1] General Howe's letter.

Some changes made in the stations of the British ships and troops having relieved the American General from his apprehensions of a sudden march to Philadelphia, he advanced Sullivan's division to Pompton Plains, on the way to Peekskill; and proceeded with the main body of his army, to Morristown;—thus approaching the highlands of New York, without removing so far from Middlebrook as to be unable to regain that camp should General Howe indicate an intention to seize it.

Meanwhile, the British General prosecuted, diligently, his plan of embarkation, which was, necessarily, attended with circumstances indicating a much longer voyage than that up the North river. These circumstances were immediately communicated to the eastern states, and congress was earnestly pressed to strengthen the fortifications on the Delaware, and to increase the obstructions in that river.

In the midst of these appearances, certain intelligence was received that Burgoyne was in great force on the lakes, and was advancing against Ticonderoga. This intelligence confirmed the opinion that the main object of Howe must be to effect a junction with Burgoyne on the North River. Under this impression, General Washington ordered Sullivan to Peekskill, and advanced, himself, first to Pompton Plains, and afterwards to the Clove, where he determined to remain until the views of the enemy should be disclosed.

July 16.

While the General thus anxiously watched the movements of his adversary, an agreeable and unexpected piece of intelligence was received from New England. The command of the British troops in Rhode Island had devolved on General Prescot. Thinking himself perfectly secure in an island, the water surrounding which was believed to be entirely guarded by his cruisers, and at the head of an army greatly superior to any force then collected in that department, he indulged himself in convenient quarters, rather distant from camp; and was remiss with respect to the guards about his person. Information of this negligence was communicated to the main, and a plan was formed to surprise him. This spirited enterprise was executed, with equal courage and address, by Lieutenant Colonel Barton of the Rhode Island militia.

On the night of the 10th, he embarked on board four whale boats, at Warwick Neck, with a party consisting of about forty persons, including Captains Adams, and Philips, and several other officers. After proceeding about ten miles by water, unobserved by the British guardboats, although several ships of war lay in that quarter, he landed on the west of the island, about midway between Newport and Bristol ferry, and marching a mile to the quarters of Prescot, dexterously seized the sentinel at his door, and one of his aids. The general himself was taken out of bed, and conveyed to a place of safety.

The success of this intrepid enterprise diffused the more joy throughout America, because it was supposed to secure the liberation of General Lee, by enabling General Washington to offer an officer of equal rank in exchange for him.

Congress expressed a high sense of the gallant conduct of Colonel Barton, and his party; and presented him with a sword as a mark of approbation.

As the fleet fell down towards Sandy Hook, General Washington withdrew slowly from the Clove, and disposed his army in different divisions, so as to march to any point which might be attacked.

At length, the embarkation was completed, and the fleet put to sea.

CHAPTER VIII

On receiving intelligence that the British fleet had sailed from New York, the American army commenced its march to the Delaware. About the time of its departure, a letter from Sir William Howe, directed to General Burgoyne at Quebec, was delivered to General Putnam by the person who had received it, as was said, for the purpose of carrying it to Quebec, and was transmitted by Putnam to the Commander-in-chief. In this letter, General Howe said that "he was exhibiting the appearance of moving to the southward, while his real intent was against Boston, from whence he would co-operate with the army of Canada." This stratagem entirely failed. General Washington, at once, perceived that the letter was written with a design that it should fall into his hands, and mislead him with respect to the views of the writer.

1777. July.

While the utmost vigilance and judgment were required to conduct the operations of the army under the immediate command of General Washington, the transactions in the north were too vitally interesting not to engage a large share of his attention. He not only hastened the march of those generals who were designed to act in that department, and pressed the governors of the eastern states to reinforce the retreating army with all their militia, but made large detachments of choice troops from his own;—thus weakening himself in order to strengthen other generals whose strength would be more useful. The fame of being himself the leader of the victorious army did not, with false glare, dazzle his judgment, or conceal the superior public advantage to be derived from defeating the plans of Burgoyne.

On the 30th of July, all doubts respecting the destination of the British fleet were supposed to be removed by its appearance off the capes of Delaware; and orders were immediately given for assembling the detached parts of the army in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia. Scarcely were these orders given, when the aspect of affairs was changed, and they were countermanded. An express from Cape May brought the information that the fleet had sailed out of the bay of Delaware, and was proceeding eastward. From this time, no intelligence respecting it was received until about the 7th of August, when it appeared a few leagues south of the capes of Delaware, after which it disappeared, and was not again seen until late in that month. The fact was, that on entering the capes of Delaware, the difficulties attending an attempt to carry his fleet up that bay and river, determined General Howe to relinquish his original design, and to transport his army to the Chesapeake. Contrary winds prevented his gaining the mouth of that bay until the 16th of August.

The several divisions of the army were immediately ordered [1] to unite in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, and the militia of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and the northern counties of Virginia, were directed to take the field.

The British fleet, after entering the Chesapeake, sailed up it with favourable winds, and entered Elk river, up which the admiral proceeded as high as it was safely navigable; and on the 25th of August the troops were landed at the ferry.

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[1] These orders were received by General Sullivan, who had been encamped about Hanover, in Jersey, on his return from an expedition to Staten Island. The British force on that island amounted to between two and three thousand men, of whom nearly one thousand were provincials, who were distributed along the coast, opposite the Jersey shore. The Europeans occupied a fortified camp near the watering place; and General Sullivan thought it practicable to surprise the provincials, and bring them off before they could be supported by the Europeans. Only six boats had been procured for the conveyance of his troops; yet they crossed over into the island before day undiscovered, and completely surprised two of the provincial parties, commanded by Colonels Lawrence and Barton, both of whom, with several officers and men were taken. The alarm being given, Sullivan attempted to withdraw from the island. The number of boats not being sufficient for the embarkation of all his troops at the same time, some confusion obtained among them. General Campbell advanced in force on the rear guard while waiting for the return of the boats, which was captured after making a gallant resistance.

This enterprise was well planned, and in its commencement, happily executed; but ought not to have been undertaken without a number of boats sufficient to secure the retreat.

The loss of the British in prisoners amounted to eleven officers, and one hundred and thirty privates. That of the Americans, is stated by Sullivan, at one major, one captain, one lieutenant, and ten privates killed, and fifteen wounded, and nine officers, and one hundred and twenty-seven privates prisoners. General Campbell, in his account of the action says, that he made two hundred and fifty-nine prisoners, among whom were one lieutenant colonel, three majors, two captains, and fifteen inferior officers.

The British army, at its disembarkation, has been generally computed at eighteen thousand men. They were in good health and spirits, admirably supplied with all the implements of war, and led by an experienced general, of unquestionable military talents.

The day before Sir William Howe landed, the American army marched through Philadelphia, and proceeded to the Brandywine. The divisions of Greene and Stephen were advanced nearer to the Head of Elk, and encamped behind White Clay creek.

Congress had directed General Smallwood and Colonel Gist to take command of the militia of Maryland, who had been ordered by General Washington to assemble near the head of the bay. The militia of the lower counties of Delaware, commanded by General Rodney, were directed also to assemble in the British rear, and to co-operate with those of Maryland. Colonel Richardson's continental regiment, which had been stationed on the Eastern shore, was ordered to join this corps.

The militia of Pennsylvania, commanded by Major General Armstrong, were united with the main body of the army. Great exertions were used to bring them promptly into the field, and they came forward generally with some degree of alacrity. Although the numbers required by Congress did not assemble, more appeared than could be armed.

The real strength of the American army can not be accurately stated. It was estimated by Sir William Howe at fifteen thousand, including militia; and this estimate did not far exceed their real total, as exhibited by the returns. But it is a fact, attributable in some degree to the badness of their clothing, and scarcity of tents, and in some degree to the neglect of the commissary department, to provide those articles of food which contribute to the preservation of health, that the effective force was always far below the total number. The effectives, including militia, did not exceed eleven thousand.

Morgan's regiment of riflemen having been detached to the northern army, a corps of light infantry was formed for the occasion, the command of which was given to General Maxwell. This corps was advanced to Iron Hill, about three miles in front of White Clay creek. The cavalry, consisting of four regiments, amounting to about nine hundred men, including persons of every description, were employed principally on the lines.

One division of the British army, commanded by Sir William Howe in person, had taken post at Elkton, with its van advanced to Gray's Hill. General Knyphausen, with a second division, had crossed the ferry and encamped at Cecil Court House. He was directed to march up on the eastern side of the river, and to join Sir William Howe seven or eight miles south of Christiana. The intention to make this movement being disclosed by the preparatory arrangements, General Washington advised Maxwell to post a choice body of men in the night on an advantageous part of the road, in order to annoy him on his march. In the morning of the third of September, the two divisions under Lord Cornwallis and General Knyphausen, moved forward and formed a junction at Pencader, or Atkins' tavern, where they encamped. In their way, the column led by Lord Cornwallis fell in with and attacked Maxwell, who retreated over White Clay creek, with the loss of about forty killed and wounded.

The whole American army, except the light infantry, took a position behind Red Clay creek, on the road leading from the camp of Sir William Howe to Philadelphia. On this ground, the general thought it probable that the fate of Philadelphia, and of the campaign, might be decided; and he resorted to all the means in his power to encourage his troops, and stimulate them to the greatest exertions.

On the 8th of September, the British army was again put in motion. The main body advanced by Newark, upon the right of the Americans, and encamped within four miles of that place, extending its left still farther up the country. Meanwhile, a strong column made a show of attacking in front, and, after manœuvring some time, halted at Milton, within two miles of the centre.

General Washington was soon convinced that the column in front was designed only to amuse, while the left should effect the principal and real object. Believing that object to be to turn his right, and cut off his communication with Philadelphia, he changed his ground, and, crossing the Brandywine early in the night, took post behind that river, at Chadd's Ford. General Maxwell was advanced in front, and placed, advantageously on the hills south of the river, on the road leading over the ford. The militia under General Armstrong were posted at a ford two miles below Chadd's; and the right extended some miles above, with a view to other passes deemed less practicable. In this position, General Washington attended the movements of the adverse army.

In the evening, Howe marched forward in two columns, which united, early the next morning, at Kennet's Square; after which he advanced parties on the roads leading to Lancaster, to Chadd's Ford, and to Wilmington. Sept. 10.

The armies were now within seven miles of each other, with only the Brandywine between them, which opposed no obstacle to a general engagement. This was sought by Howe, and not avoided by Washington. It was impossible to protect Philadelphia without a victory and this object was deemed throughout America, and especially by congress, of such magnitude as to require that an action should be hazarded for its attainment.

In the morning of the 11th, soon after day, information was received that the whole British army was in motion, advancing on the direct road leading over Chadd's Ford. The Americans were immediately under arms, and placed in order of battle, for the purpose of contesting the passage of the river. Skirmishing soon commenced between the advanced parties; and, by ten, Maxwell's corps, with little loss on either side, was driven over the Brandywine below the ford. Knyphausen, who commanded this column, paraded on the heights, reconnoitred the American army, and appeared to be making dispositions to force the passage of the river. A skirt of woods, with the river, divided him from Maxwell's corps, small parties of whom occasionally crossed over, and kept up a scattering fire, by which not much execution was done. At length one of these parties, led by Captains Waggoner and Porterfield, engaged the British flank guard very closely, killed a captain with ten or fifteen privates, drove them out of the wood, and were on the point of taking a field piece. The sharpness of the skirmish soon drew a large body of the British to that quarter, and the Americans were again driven over the Brandywine.[1]

About eleven in the morning, information reached General Washington that a large column with many field pieces, had taken a road leading from Kennet's Square, directly up the country, and had entered the great valley road, down which they were marching to the upper fords of the Brandywine. This information was given by Colonel Ross of Pennsylvania, who was in their rear, and estimated their numbers at five thousand men.

On receiving this information, Washington is said to have determined to detach Sullivan and Lord Stirling to engage the left division of the British army, and with the residue of his troops, to cross Chadd's Ford in person, and attack Kynphausen. Before this plan could be executed, counter intelligence was received inducing an opinion that the movement of the British on their left was a feint, and that the column under Lord Cornwallis, after making demonstrations of crossing the Brandywine above its forks, had marched down the southern side of that river to reunite itself with Knyphausen.

Not long after the first communication was made by Colonel Ross, information was received from Colonel Bland of the cavalry, which produced some doubt respecting the strength of this column. He saw only two brigades; but the dust appeared to rise in their rear for a considerable distance. A major of the militia came in, who alleged that he left the forks of the Brandywine so late in the day that it was supposed Lord Cornwallis must have passed them by that time, had he continued his march in that direction, and who asserted that no enemy had appeared in that quarter. Some light horsemen who had been sent to reconnoitre the road, returned with the same information.

The uncertainty produced by this contradictory intelligence was at length removed; and about two in the afternoon, it was ascertained that the column led by Lord Cornwallis, after making a circuit of about seventeen miles, had crossed the river above its forks, and was advancing in great force.

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[1] The author was an eye-witness of this skirmish.

A change of disposition was immediately made. The divisions commanded by Sullivan, Stirling, and Stephen, took new ground, advanced farther up the Brandywine, and fronted the British column marching down that river. The division commanded by Wayne remained at Chadd's Ford, to keep Knyphausen in check; in which service Maxwell was to co-operate. Greene's division, accompanied by General Washington in person, formed a reserve, and took a central position between the right and left wings.

The divisions detached against Lord Cornwallis formed hastily on an advantageous piece of ground, above Birmingham Meeting House, with their left near the Brandywine, and having both flanks covered by a thick wood. The artillery was judiciously posted, and the disposition of the whole was well made. Unfortunately, Sullivan's division, in taking its ground, made too large a circuit, and was scarcely formed when the attack commenced.

On perceiving the Americans, the British army was formed in order of battle; and, about half past four, the action began. It was kept up warmly for some time. The American right first gave way, and by its flight exposed the flank of the remaining divisions to a galling fire. The line continued to break from the right, and, in a short time, was completely routed. The right wing made some attempts to rally, but, being briskly charged, again broke, and the flight became general.

On the commencement of the action on the right, General Washington pressed forward with Greene, to the support of that wing; but, before his arrival, its rout was complete, and he could only check the pursuit. For this purpose, the 10th Virginia regiment commanded by Colonel Stevens, and a regiment of Pennsylvania commanded by Colonel Stewart, neither of which had been in action, were posted advantageously on the road taken by the defeated army. The impression made by the fire of these regiments, and the approach of night, induced Sir William Howe, after dispersing them, to give over the pursuit.

When the American right was found to be fully engaged with Lord Cornwallis, Knyphausen made real dispositions for crossing the river. Chadd's Ford was defended by an intrenchment and battery, with three field pieces, and a howitzer. After some resistance, the work was forced; and, the defeat of the right being known, the left wing also withdrew from its ground. The whole army retreated that night to Chester, and the next day to Philadelphia.

The loss sustained by the Americans in this action, has been estimated at three hundred killed, and six hundred wounded. Between three and four hundred, principally the wounded, were made prisoners.

As must ever be the case in new raised armies, unused to danger, and from which undeserving officers have not been expelled, their conduct was not uniform. Some regiments, especially those which had served the preceding campaign, maintained their ground with the firmness and intrepidity of veterans, while others gave way as soon as they were pressed. The authors of a very correct history of the war,[1] speaking of this action, say, "a part of their troops, among whom were particularly numbered some Virginia [2] regiments, and the whole corps of artillery, behaved exceedingly well in some of the actions of this day, exhibiting a degree of order, firmness, and resolution, and preserving such a countenance in extremely sharp service, as would not have discredited veterans. Some other bodies of their troops behaved very badly." [3]

The official letter of Sir William Howe stated his loss at rather less than one hundred killed, and four hundred wounded. As the Americans sustained very little injury in the retreat, this inequality of loss can be ascribed only to the inferiority of their arms. Many of their muskets were scarcely fit for service; and, being of unequal caliber, their cartridges could not be so well fitted, and, consequently, their fire could not do as much execution as that of the enemy. This radical defect was felt in all the operations of the army.

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[1] Annual Register.

[2] The third Virginia regiment commanded by Colonel Marshall, which had performed extremely severe duty in the campaign of 1776, was placed in a wood on the right, and in front of Woodford's brigade, and Stephen's division. Though attacked by much superior numbers, it maintained its position without losing an inch of ground, until both its flanks were turned, its ammunition nearly expended, and more than half the officers, and one third of the soldiers were killed and wounded. Colonel Marshall, whose horse had received two balls, then retired in good order to resume his position on the right of his division; but it had already retreated.

[3] Deboore's brigade broke first; and, on an inquiry into his conduct being directed, he resigned. A misunderstanding existed between him and Sullivan, on whose right he was stationed.

From the ardour with which the Commander-in-chief had inspired his troops before this action, it is probable that the conflict would have been more severe, had the intelligence respecting the movement on the left of the British army been less contradictory. Raw troops, changing their ground in the moment of action, and attacked in the agitation of moving, are easily thrown into confusion. This was the critical situation of a part of Sullivan's division, and was the cause of the right's breaking before Greene could be brought up to support it; after which, it was impossible to retrieve the fortune of the day.

But had the best disposition of the troops been made at the time, which subsequent intelligence would suggest, the action could not have terminated in favour of the Americans. Their inferiority in numbers, in discipline, and in arms, was too great to leave them a probable prospect of victory. A battle however was not to be avoided. The opinion of the public, and of congress, demanded it. The loss of Philadelphia, without an attempt to preserve it, would have excited discontents which, in the United States, might be productive of serious mischief; and action, though attended with defeat, provided the loss be not too great, must improve an army in which, not only the military talents, but even the courage, of officers, some of them of high rank, remained to be ascertained.

Among the wounded was the Marquis de la Fayette, and Brigadier General Woodford.

The battle of Brandywine was not considered as decisive by congress, the General, or the army. The opinion was carefully cherished that the British had gained only the ground; and that their loss was still more considerable than had been sustained by the Americans. Congress appeared determined to risk another battle for the metropolis of America. Far from discovering any intention to change their place of session, they passed vigorous resolutions for reinforcing the army, and directed General Washington to give the necessary orders for completing the defences of the Delaware.

From Chester, the army marched through Darby, over the Schuylkill bridge, to its former ground, near the falls of that river. General Greene's division, which, having been less in action, was more entire than any other, covered the rear; and the corps of Maxwell remained at Chester until the next day, as a rallying point for the small parties, and straggling soldiers, who might yet be in the neighbourhood.

Having allowed his army one day for repose and refreshment, General Washington recrossed the Schuylkill, and proceeded on the Lancaster road, with the intention of risking another engagement.

Sir William Howe passed the night of the 11th on the field of battle. On the succeeding day, he detached Major General Grant with two brigades to Concord meeting-house; and on the 13th, Lord Cornwallis joined General Grant, and marched towards Chester. Another detachment took possession of Wilmington; to which place the sick and wounded were conveyed.

To prevent a sudden movement to Philadelphia by the lower road, the bridge over the Schuylkill was loosened from its moorings, and General Armstrong was directed, with the Pennsylvania militia to guard the passes over that river.

On the 15th, the American army, intending to gain the left of the British, reached the Warren tavern, on the Lancaster road, twenty-three miles from Philadelphia. Intelligence was received, early next morning, that Howe was approaching in two columns. It being too late to reach the ground he had intended to occupy, Washington resolved to meet and engage him in front.

Sept. 16.

Both armies prepared, with great alacrity, for battle. The advanced parties had met, and were beginning the skirmish, when they were separated by a heavy rain, which, becoming more and more violent, rendered the retreat of the Americans a measure of absolute necessity. The inferiority of their arms never brought them into such imminent peril as on this occasion. Their gun-locks not being well secured, their muskets soon became unfit for use. Their cartridge-boxes had been so inartificially constructed, as not to protect their ammunition from the tempest. Their cartridges were soon damaged; and this mischief was the more serious, because very many of the soldiers were without bayonets.

The army being thus rendered unfit for action, the design of giving battle was reluctantly abandoned, and a retreat commenced. It was continued all the day, and great part of the night, through a cold and most distressing rain, and very deep roads. A few hours before day, the troops halted at the Yellow Springs, where their arms and ammunition were examined, and the alarming fact was disclosed, that scarcely a musket in a regiment could be discharged, and scarcely one cartridge in a box was fit for use. This state of things suggested the precaution of moving to a still greater distance, in order to refit their arms, obtain a fresh supply of ammunition, and revive the spirits of the army. The General therefore retired to Warwick furnace, on the south branch of French Creek, where ammunition and a few muskets might be obtained in time to dispute the passage of the Schuylkill, and make yet another effort to save Philadelphia.

Sept. 17.

The extreme severity of the weather had entirely stopped the British army. During two days, General Howe made no other movement than to unite his columns.

From French Creek, General Wayne was detached with his division into the rear of the British, with orders to join General Smallwood and, carefully concealing himself and his movements, to seize every occasion which this march might offer, of engaging them to advantage. Meanwhile, General Washington crossed to Schuylkill at Parker's ferry, and encamped on both sides of Perkiomen Creek.

General Wayne lay in the woods near the entrance of the road from Darby into that leading to Lancaster, about three miles in the rear of the left wing of the British troops encamped at Trydruffin, where he believed himself to be perfectly secure. But the country was so extensively disaffected that Sir William Howe received accurate accounts of his position and of his force. Major General Gray was detached to surprise him, and effectually accomplished his purpose. About eleven, in the night of the 20th, his piquets, driven in with charged bayonets, gave the first intimation of Gray's approach. Wayne instantly formed his division; and while his right sustained a fierce assault, directed a retreat by the left, under cover of a few regiments who, for a short time, withstood the violence of the shock. In his letter to the Commander-in-chief, he says that they gave the assailants some well-directed fires which must have done considerable execution; and that, after retreating from the ground on which the engagement commenced, they formed again, at a small distance from the scene of action; but that both parties drew off without renewing the conflict. He states his loss at about one hundred and fifty[1] killed and wounded. The British accounts admit, on their part, a loss of only seven.

When the attack commenced, General Smallwood, who was on his march to join Wayne, a circumstance entirely unexpected by General Gray, was within less than a mile of him; and, had he commanded regulars, might have given a very different turn to the night. But his militia thought only of their own safety; and, having fallen in with a party returning from the pursuit of Wayne, fled in confusion with the loss of only one man.

Some severe animadversions on this unfortunate affair having been made in the army, General Wayne demanded a court martial, which, after investigating his conduct, was unanimously of opinion, "that he had done every thing to be expected from an active, brave, and vigilant officer;" and acquitted him with honour.

Having secured his rear, by compelling Wayne to take a
Sept. 21. greater distance, Sir William Howe marched along the valley road to the Schuylkill, and encamped on the bank of that river, from the Fatland ford up to French Creek, along the front of the American army. To secure his right from being turned, General Washington again changed his position, and encamped with his left near, but above the British right.

General Howe now relinquished his plan of bringing Washington to another battle; and, thinking it advisable, perhaps,
Sept. 22. to transfer the seat of war to the neighbourhood of his ships, determined to cross the Schuylkill, and take possession of Philadelphia. In the afternoon, he ordered one detachment to cross at Fatland ford which was on his right, and another to cross at Gordon's ford, on his left, and to take

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[1] The British accounts represent the American loss to have been much more considerable. It probably amounted to at least three hundred men.

possession of the heights commanding them. These orders were executed without much difficulty, and the American troops placed to defend these fords were easily dispersed.

This service being effected, the whole army marched by its right, about midnight, and crossing at Fatland without opposition. proceeded a considerable distance towards Philadelphia, and encamped, with its left near Sweed's ford, and its right on the Manatawny road, having Stony run in its front.

It was now apparent that only immediate victory could save Philadelphia from the grasp of the British general, whose situation gave him the option of either taking possession of that place, or endeavouring to bring on another engagement. If, therefore, a battle must certainly be risked to save the capital, it would be necessary to attack the enemy.

Public opinion, which a military chief finds too much difficulty in resisting, and the opinion of Congress required a battle; but, on a temperate consideration of circumstances, Washington came to the wise decision of avoiding one for the present.

His reasons for this decision were conclusive. Wayne and Smallwood had not yet joined the army. The continental troops ordered from Peekskill, who had been detained for a time by an incursion from New York, were approaching; and a reinforcement of Jersey militia, under General Dickinson, was also expected.

To these powerful motives against risking an engagement, other considerations of great weight were added, founded on the condition of his soldiers. An army, manœuvring in an open country, in the face of a very superior enemy, is unavoidably exposed to excessive fatigue, and extreme hardship. The effect of these hardships was much increased by the privations under which the American troops suffered. While in almost continual motion, wading deep rivers, and encountering every vicissitude of the seasons, they were without tents, nearly without shoes, or winter clothes, and often without food.

A council of war concurred in the opinion the Commander-in-chief had formed, not to march against the enemy, but to allow his harassed troops a few days for repose, and to remain on his present ground until the expected reinforcements should arrive.

Immediately after the battle of Brandywine, the distressed situation of the army had been represented to congress, who had recommended it to the executive of Pennsylvania to seize the cloths and other military stores in the ware houses of Philadelphia, and, after granting certificates expressing their value, to convey them to a place of safety. The executive, being unwilling to encounter the odium of this strong measure, advised that the extraordinary powers of the Commander-in-chief should be used on the occasion. Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton, one of the general's aids, a young gentleman already in high estimation for his talents and zeal, was employed on this delicate business. "Your own prudence," said the General, in a letter to him while in Philadelphia, "will point out the least exceptional means to be pursued; but remember, delicacy and a strict adherence to the ordinary mode of application must give place to our necessities. We must, if possible, accommodate the soldiers with such articles as they stand in need of, or we shall have just reason to apprehend the most injurious and alarming consequences from the approaching season."

All the efforts however of this very active officer could not obtain a supply, in any degree, adequate to the pressing and increasing wants of the army.

Colonel Hamilton was also directed to cause the military stores which had been previously collected to a large amount in Philadelphia, and the vessels which were lying at the wharves, to be removed up the Delaware. This duty was executed with so much vigilance that very little public property fell, with the city, into the hands of the British general, who entered it on the 26th of September. The members of congress separated on the eighteenth, in the evening, and reassembled at Lancaster on the twenty-seventh of the same month.

From the 25th of August, when the British army landed at the Head of Elk, until the 26th of September when it entered Philadelphia, the campaign had been active, and the duties of the American general uncommonly arduous. The best English writers bestow high economiums on Sir William Howe for his military skill, and masterly movements during this period. At Brandywine especially, Washington is supposed to have been "outgeneraled, more outgeneraled than in any action during the war." If all the operations of this trying period be examined, and the means in possession of both be considered, the American chief will appear, in no respect, inferior to his adversary, or unworthy of the high place assigned to him in the opinions of his countrymen. With an army decidedly inferior, not only in numbers, but in every military requisite except courage, in an open country, he employed his enemy near thirty days in advancing about sixty miles. In this time he fought one general action; and, though defeated, was able to reassemble the same undisciplined, unclothed, and almost unfed army; and, the fifth day afterwards, again to offer battle. When the armies were separated by a storm which involved him in the most distressing circumstances, he extricated himself from them, and still maintained a respectable and imposing countenance.

The only advantage he is supposed to have given was at the battle of Brandywine; and that was produced by the contrariety and uncertainty of the intelligence received. A general must be governed by his intelligence, and must regulate his measures by his information. It is his duty to obtain correct information; and among the most valuable traits of a military character, is the skill to select those means which will obtain it. Yet the best selected means are not always successful; and, in a new army, where military talent has not been well tried by the standard of experience, the general is peculiarly exposed to the chance of employing not the best instruments. In a country, too, which is covered with wood, precise information of the numbers composing different columns is to be gained with difficulty.

It has been said "that the Americans do not appear to have made all the use that might be expected of the advantages which the country afforded for harassing and impeding the British army."

In estimating this objection, it ought to be recollected that General Smallwood was directed, with the militia of Maryland and Delaware, supported by a regiment of continental troops, to hang on and harass the rear of the enemy: that General Maxwell, with a select corps consisting of a thousand men, was ordered to seize every occasion to annoy him on his march:

that General Wayne with his division, was afterwards detached to unite with Smallwood, and command the whole force collected in the rear, which would have been very respectable.

If the militia did not assemble in the numbers expected, or effect the service allotted to them, their failure is not attributable to General Washington. His calls on them had been early and energetic; and the state of his army did not admit of his making larger detachments from it to supply the place they had been designed to fill.

Loud complaints had been made against General Maxwell by the officers of his corps; and a court was ordered to inquire into his conduct, by whom he was acquitted. Whether that officer omitted to seize the proper occasions to annoy the enemy, or the cautious and compact movements of Sir William Howe afforded none, can not be easily ascertained. General Washington felt the loss of Morgan, and wrote pressingly to Gates, after his success against Burgoyne, to restore him that officer, with his regiment, as soon as possible.

CHAPTER IX

PHILADELPHIA being lost, General Washington sought to make its occupation inconvenient and insecure, by rendering it inaccessible to the British fleet. With this 1777. design, works had been erected on a low marshy island in the Delaware, near the junction of the Schuylkill, which, from the nature of its soil, was called Mud island. On the opposite shore of Jersey, at a place called Red Bank, a fort had also been constructed which was defended with heavy artillery. In the deep channel between, or under cover of these batteries, several ranges of frames had been sunk, to which, from their resemblance to that machine, the name of chevaux-de-frise had been given. These frames were so strong and heavy as to be destructive of any ship which might strike against them, and were sunk in such a depth of water as rendered it equally difficult to weigh them or cut them through; no attempt to raise them, or to open the channel in any manner could be successful until the command of the shores on both sides should be obtained.

Other ranges of these machines had been sunk about three miles lower down the river; and some considerable works were in progress at Billingsport on the Jersey side, which were in such forwardness as to be provided with artillery. These works and machines were farther supported by several galleys mounting heavy cannon, together with two floating batteries, a number of armed vessels and some fire ships.

The present relative situation of the armies gave a decisive importance to these works. Cutting off the communication of General Howe with his fleet they prevented his receiving supplies by water, while the American vessels in the river above fort Mifflin, the name given to the fort on Mud island, rendered it difficult to forage in Jersey, General Washington hoped to render his supplies on the side of Pennsylvania so precarious as to compel him to evacuate Philadelphia.

The advantages of this situation were considerably diminished by the capture of the Delaware frigate.

The day after Lord Cornwallis entered Philadelphia, three batteries were commenced for the purpose of acting against any American ships which might appear before the town. While yet incomplete, they were attacked by two frigates, assisted by several galleys and gondolas. The Delaware, being left by the tide while engaged with the battery, grounded and was captured; soon after which, the smaller frigate, and the other vessels, retired under the guns of the fort. This circumstance was the more interesting, as it gave the British General the command of the ferry, and, consequently, free access to Jersey, and enabled him to intercept the communication between the forts below, and Trenton, from which place the garrisons were to have drawn their military stores.

All the expected reinforcements, except the state regiment and militia from Virginia, being arrived, and the detached parties being called in, the effective strength of the army amounted to eight thousand continental troops, and three thousand militia. With this force, General Washington determined to approach the enemy, and seize the first favourable moment to attack him.

Sept. 30. In pursuance of this determination, the army took a position on the Skippack road, about twenty miles from Philadelphia, and sixteen from Germantown,—a long village stretching on both sides the great road leading northward from Philadelphia, which forms one continued street nearly two miles in length. The British line of encampment crossed this village at right angles near the centre, and Lord Cornwallis, with four regiments of grenadiers, occupied Philadelphia. The immediate object of General Howe being the removal of the obstructions in the river, Colonel Stirling, with two regiments, had been detached to take possession of the fort at Billingsport, which he accomplished without opposition. This service being effected, and the works facing the water destroyed, Colonel Stirling was directed to escort a convoy of provisions from Chester to Philadelphia. Some apprehensions being entertained for the safety of this convoy, another regiment was detached from Germantown, with directions to join Colonel Stirling.[1] Oct. 3.

This division of the British force appeared to Washington to furnish a fair opportunity to engage Sir William Howe with advantage. Determining to avail himself of it, he formed a plan for surprising the camp at Germantown, and attacking both wings, in front and rear, at the same instant.

The divisions of Sullivan and Wayne, flanked by Conway's brigade, were to march down the main road, and, entering the town by the way of Chestnut Hill, to attack the left wing; while General Armstrong, with the Pennsylvania militia, was to move down the Manatawny road[2] by Vanduring's mill, and turning the left flank to attack in the rear. The Commander-in-chief accompanied this column.

The divisions of Greene and Stephens, flanked by M'Dougal's brigade, were to take a circuit by the Lime Kiln road, and, entering the town at the market house, to attack the right wing.

The militia of Maryland and Jersey, under Generals Smallwood and Forman, were to march down the old York road, and turning the right to fall upon its rear.

The division of Lord Stirling, and the brigades of Nash and Maxwell, were to form a corps de reserve.

Parties of cavalry were silently to scour the roads to prevent observation, and to keep up the communication between the heads of the several columns.

The necessary arrangements being made, the army moved from its ground at seven in the afternoon. Before sunrise the next morning, the advance of the column led by Sullivan, encountered and drove in a picket placed at Mount Airy, the house of Mr. Allen.[3] The main body followed close in the rear, and engaging the light infantry and the 40th regiment, posted at the head of the village, soon forced them to give way, leaving their baggage behind them. Though closely pursued, Lieutenant Colonel Husgrave threw himself with five Oct. 4.

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[1] Annual Register.—Stedman.

[2] Better known as the Ridge road.

[3] Since Robinson's.

companies of the 40th regiment into a large stone house belonging to Mr. Chew, which stood directly in the way of Wayne's division, and poured on the Americans an incessant and galling fire of musketry from its doors and windows. After making some unsuccessful, and bloody attempts to carry this house by storm, and then battering it for a few minutes with field artillery, which was found too light to make any impression on its walls, a regiment was left to observe the party within it, while the troops who had been checked by Colonel Musgrave again moved forward, passing to the left of the house.

In rather more than half an hour after Sullivan had been engaged, the left wing, having formed the line, came also into action; and, attacking the light infantry posted in front of the British right wing, soon drove it from its ground. While rapidly pursuing the flying enemy, Woodford's brigade,[1] which was on the right of this wing, was arrested by a heavy fire from Chew's house, directed against its right flank. The inefficiency of musketry against troops thus sheltered being instantly perceived, the brigade was drawn off to the left by its commanding officers, and the field-pieces attached to it were ordered up to play on the house, but were too light to be of service. Some time was consumed in this operation, and the advance of the brigade was, of course, retarded. This part of the line was consequently broken, and the two brigades composing the division of Stephens were not only separated from each other, but from the other division which was led by General Greene in person. That division, consisting of the brigades of Muhlenberg and Scott, pressing forward with eagerness, encountered and broke a part of the British right wing, entered the village, and made a considerable number of prisoners.

Thus far the prospect was flattering. The attack had been made with great spirit; several brigades had entered the town; and such an impression had been made on the British army as to justify the expectation that its wings might be separated from each other, and a complete victory be obtained. Had the American troops possessed the advantages given by experience; had every division of the army performed with precision the part allotted to it, there is yet reason to believe that the hopes inspired by this favourable commencement would not have been disappointed. But the face of the country, and the darkness of the morning produced by a fog of uncommon density, co-operating with the want of discipline in the army, and the derangements of the corps from the incidents at Chew's house, blasted these flattering appearances, and defeated the enterprise.

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[1] The author was in this brigade, and describes this part of the action from his own observation.

The ground over which the British were pursued abounded with small and strong enclosures, which frequently broke the line of the advancing army. The two divisions of the right wing had been separated at Chew's house; and immediately after their passing it, the right of the left wing was stopped at the same place, so as to cause a division of that wing also. The darkness of the morning rendered it difficult to distinguish objects even at an inconsiderable distance; and it was impossible for the Commander-in-chief to learn the situation of the whole, or to correct the confusion which was commencing. The divisions and brigades separated at Chew's house could not be reunited; and, even among those parts which remained entire, a considerable degree of disorder was soon introduced by the impediments to their advance. Some regiments pursuing with more vivacity than others, they were separated from each other, their weight lessened, and their effect impaired. The darkness which obstructed the reunion of the broken parts of the American army, also prevented their discerning the real situation of the enemy, so as to improve the first impression; and, in some instances, some corps being in advance of others, produced uncertainty whether the troops, seen indistinctly, were friends or foes.

The attacks on the flanks and rear, which formed a part of the original plan, do not appear ever to have been made. The Pennsylvania militia came in view of the chasseurs who flanked the left of the British line, but did not engage them closely. The Maryland and Jersey militia just showed themselves on the right flank, about the time Greene was commencing a retreat.

These embarrassments gave the British time to recover from the consternation into which they had been thrown. General Knyphausen, who commanded their left, detached two brigades to meet the right of Sullivan which had penetrated far into the village, before his left, which had been detained at Chew's house, could rejoin him; and the action became warm in this quarter. The British right also recovered from its surprise, and advanced on that part of Greene's division which had entered the town. After a sharp engagement these two brigades began to retreat, and those which were most in advance were surrounded and compelled to surrender. About the same time the right wing also began to retreat. It is understood that they had expended their ammunition.

Every effort to stop this retrograde movement proved ineffectual. The division of Wayne fell back on that of Stephens, and was for an instant mistaken for the enemy. General confusion prevailed, and the confidence felt in the beginning of the action was lost. With infinite chagrin General Washington was compelled to relinquish his hopes of victory, and turn his attention to the security of his army. The enemy not being sufficiently recovered to endanger his rear, the retreat was made without loss, under cover of the division of Stephens, which had scarcely been in the engagement.

In this battle, about two hundred Americans were killed, near three times that number wounded, and about four hundred were made prisoners. Among the killed was General Nash of North Carolina; and among the prisoners, was Colonel Matthews of Virginia, whose regiment had penetrated into the centre of the town.

The loss of the British, as stated in the official return of General Howe, did not much exceed five hundred in killed and wounded, of whom less than one hundred were killed; among the latter were Brigadier General Agnew and Colonel Bird.

The American army retreated the same day, about twenty miles, to Perkiomen Creek, where a small reinforcement, consisting of fifteen hundred militia and a state regiment, was received from Virginia; after which it again advanced towards Philadelphia, and encamped once more on Skippack creek.

The plan of the battle of Germantown must be admitted to have been judiciously formed; and, in its commencement, to have been happily conducted. But a strict adherence to it by those who were entrusted with the execution of its several parts, was indispensable to its success.

Major General Stephens, who commanded the right division of the left wing, was cashiered for misconduct on the retreat, and for intoxication.

Congress expressed, in decided terms, their approbation both of the plan of this enterprise, and of the courage with which it was executed; for which their thanks were given to the general and the army.[1]

The attention of both armies was now principally directed to the forts below Philadelphia.

The loss of the Delaware frigate, and of Billingsport, greatly discouraged the seamen by whom the gallies and floating batteries were manned. Believing the fate of America to be decided, an opinion strengthened by the intelligence received from their connexions in Philadelphia, they manifested the most alarming defection, and several officers as well as sailors deserted to the enemy. This desponding temper was checked by the battle of Germantown, and by throwing a garrison of continental troops into the fort at Red Bank, called fort Mercer, the defence of which had been entrusted to militia. This fort commanded the channel between the Jersey shore and Mud Island; and the American vessels were secure under its guns. The militia of Jersey were relied on to reinforce its garrison, and also to form a corps of observation which might harass the rear of any detachment investing the place.

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[1] On hearing that General Howe had landed at the head of the Chesapeake, Sir Henry Clinton, for the purpose of averting those aids which Washington might draw from the north of the Delaware, entered Jersey at the head of three thousand men. On the approach of General M'Dougal with a body of continental troops from Peekskill, and on hearing that the militia were assembling under General Dickinson, he returned to New York and Staten Island with the cattle he had collected, having lost in the expedition only eight men killed and twice as many wounded.

M'Dougal continued his march towards the Delaware; and the utmost exertions were made both by Governor Livingston and General Dickinson to collect the militia for the purpose of aiding the army in Pennsylvania. The success of their exertions did not equal their wishes. The militia being of opinion that there was danger of a second invasion from New York, and that their services were more necessary at home than in Pennsylvania, assembled slowly and reluctantly. Five or six hundred crossed the Delaware at Philadelphia, about the time Sir William Howe crossed the Schuylkill, and were employed in the removal of stores. On the approach of the British army, they were directed to avoid it by moving up the Frankford road; but the commanding officer, having separated himself from his corps, was taken by a party of British horse employed in scouring the country; on which the regiment dispersed, and returned by different roads to Jersey. With much labour General Dickinson assembled two other corps amounting to about nine hundred men, with whom he was about to cross the Delaware when intelligence was received of the arrival at New York of a reinforcement from Europe. He was detained in Jersey for the defence of the state, and the militia designed to serve in Pennsylvania were placed under General Forman. About six hundred of them reached the army a few days before the battle of Germantown, immediately after which they were permittd to return.

To increase the inconvenience of General Howe's situation by intercepting his supplies, six hundred militia, commanded by General Potter crossed the Schuylkill, with orders to scour the country between that river and Chester; and the militia on the Delaware, above Philadelphia, were directed to watch the roads in that vicinity.

The more effectually to stop those who were seduced by the hope of gold and silver to supply the enemy at this critical time, congress passed a resolution subjecting to martial law and to death, all who should furnish them with provisions, or certain other enumerated articles, who should be taken within thirty miles of any city, town or place, in Jersey, Pennsylvania, or Delaware, occupied by British troops.

These arrangements being made to cut off supplies from the country, General Washington reoccupied the ground from which he had marched to fight the battle of Germantown.

Meanwhile, General Howe was actively preparing to attack fort Mifflin from the Pennsylvania shore. He erected some batteries at the mouth of the Schuylkill in order to command Webb's ferry, which were attacked by Commodore Hazlewood, and silenced, but, the following night, a detachment crossed over Webb's ferry into Province Island, and constructed a slight work opposite fort Mifflin, within two musket shots of the block-house, from which they were enabled to throw shot and shells into the barracks. When day-light discovered this work, three galleys and a floating battery were ordered to attack it, and the garrison surrendered. While the boats were bringing off the prisoners, a large column of British troops were seen marching into the fortress, upon which the attack on it was renewed, but without success; and two attempts made by Lieutenant Colonel Smith to storm it, failed. In a few nights, works were completed on the high ground of Province Island which enfiladed the principal battery of fort Mifflin, and rendered it necessary to throw up some cover on the platform to protect the men who worked the guns.

The aids expected from the Jersey militia were not received. "Assure yourself," said Lieutenant Colonel Smith, in a letter pressing earnestly for a reinforcement of continental troops, "that no dependence is to be put on the militia; whatever men your excellency determines on sending, no time is to be lost." The garrison of fort Mifflin was now reduced to one hundred and fifty-six effectives, and that of Red Bank did not much exceed two hundred.

In consequence of these representations, Colonel Angel, of Rhode Island, with his regiment, was ordered to Red Bank, and Lieutenant Colonel John Greene, of Virginia, with about two hundred men, to fort Mifflin.

Immediately after the battle of Brandywine, Admiral Howe sailed for the Delaware, where he expected to arrive in time to meet and co-operate with the army in and about Philadelphia. But the winds were so unfavourable, and the navigation of the bay of Delaware so difficult, that his van did not get into the river until the 4th of October. The ships of war and transports which followed, came up from the sixth to the eighth, and anchored from New Castle to Reedy Island.

The frigates, in advance of the fleet, had not yet succeeded in their endeavours to effect a passage through the lower double row of chevaux-de-frise. Though no longer protected by the fort at Billingsport, they were defended by the water force above, and the work was found more difficult than had been expected. It was not until the middle of October that the impediments were so far removed as to afford a narrow and intricate passage through them. In the mean time, the fire from the Pennsylvania shore had not produced all the effect expected from it; and it was perceived that greater exertions would be necessary for the reduction of the works than could safely be made in the present relative situation of the armies. Under this impression, General Howe, soon after the return of the American army to its former camp on the Skippack, withdrew his troops from Germantown into Philadelphia, as preparatory to a combined attack by land and water on forts Mercer and Mifflin.

After effecting a passage through the works sunk in the river at Billingsport, other difficulties still remained to be encountered by the ships of war. Several rows of chaveaux-de-frise had been sunk about half a mile below Mud Island, which were protected by the guns of the forts, as well as by the moveable water force. To silence these works, therefore, was a necessary preliminary to the removal of these obstructions in the channel.

On the 21st of October, a detachment of Hessians, amounting to twelve hundred men, commanded by Colonel Count Donop, crossed the Delaware at Philadelphia, with orders to storm the fort at Red Bank. The fortifications consisted of extensive outer works, within which was an intrenchment eight or nine feet high, boarded and fraized. Late in the evening of the twenty-second, Count Donop appeared before the fort, and attacked it with great intrepidity. It was defended with equal resolution. The outer works being too extensive to be manned by the troops in the fort, were used only to gall the assailants while advancing. On their near approach, the garrison retired within the inner intrenchment, whence they poured upon the Hessians a heavy and destructive fire. Colonel Donop received a mortal wound; and Lieutenant Colonel Mengerode, the second in command, fell about the same time. Lieutenant Colonel Minsing, the oldest remaining officer, drew off his troops, and returned next day to Philadelphia. The loss of the assailants was estimated by the Americans at four hundred men. The garrison was reinforced from fort Mifflin, and aided by the galleys which flanked the Hessians in their advance and retreat. The American loss, in killed and wounded, amounted to only thirty-two men.

The ships having been ordered to co-operate with Count Donop, the Augusta, with four smaller vessels, passed the lower line of chevaux-de-frise, opposite to Billingsport, and lay above it, waiting until the assault should be made on the fort. The flood tide setting in about the time the attack commenced, they moved with it up the river. The obstructions sunk in the Delaware had in some degree changed its channel, in consequence of which the Augusta and the Merlin grounded, a considerable distance below the second line of chevaux-de-frise and a strong wind from the north so checked the rising of the tide, that these vessels could not be floated by the flood. Their situation, however, was not discerned that evening, as the frigates which were able to approach the fort, and the batteries from the Pennsylvania shore, kept up an incessant fire on the garrison, till night put an end to the cannonade. Early next morning it was recommenced, in the hope that, under its cover, the Augusta and the Merlin might be got off. The Americans, on discovering their situation, sent four fire ships against them, but without effect. Meanwhile, a warm cannonade took place on both sides, in the course of which the Augusta took fire, and it was found impracticable to extinguish the flames. Most of the men were taken out, the frigates withdrawn, and the Merlin set on fire; after which the Augusta blew up, and a few of the crew were lost in her.

This repulse inspired congress with flattering hopes for the permanent defence of the posts on the Delaware. That body expressed its high sense of the merits of Colonel Greene of Rhode Island, who had commanded in fort Mercer; of Lieutenant Colonel Smith of Maryland, who had commanded in fort Mifflin; and of Commodore Hazlewood, who commanded the galleys; and presented a sword to each of these officers, as a mark of estimation in which their services were held.

The situation of these forts was far from justifying this confidence of their being defensible. That on Mud Island had been unskilfully constructed, and required at least eight hundred men fully to man the lines. The island is about half a mile long. Fort Mifflin was placed at the lower end, having its principal fortifications in front for the purpose of repelling ships coming up the river. The defences in the rear consisted only of a ditch and palisade, protected by two block houses, the upper story of one of which had been destroyed in the late cannonade. Above the fort were two batteries opposing those constructed by the British on Province and Carpenter's Islands, which were separated from Mud Island only by a narrow passage between four and five hundred yards wide.

The vessels of war, engaged in the defence of the Delaware, were partly in the service of the continent, and partly in that of the state of Pennsylvania, under a Commodore who received his commission from the state. A misunderstanding took place between him and Lieutenant Colonel Smith, and also between him and the officers of the continental navy; and it required all the authority of the Commander-in-chief to prevent these differences from essentially injuring the service.

The garrison of fort Mifflin consisted of only three hundred continental troops, who were worn down with fatigue, and constant watching, under the constant apprehension of being attacked from Province Island, from Philadelphia, and from the ships below.

Having failed in every attempt to draw the militia of Jersey to the Delaware, General Washington determined to strengthen the garrison by farther drafts from his army. Three hundred Pennsylvania militia were detached, to be divided between the two forts; and, a few days afterwards, General Varnum was ordered, with his brigade, to take a position about Woodbury, near Red Bank, and to relieve and reinforce the garrisons of both forts as far as his strength would permit. The hope was entertained that the appearance of so respectable a continental force might encourage the militia to assemble in greater numbers.

Aware of the advantage to result from a victory over the British army while separated from the fleet, General Washington had been uniformly determined to risk much to gain one. He had, therefore, after the battle of Germantown, continued to watch assiduously for an opportunity to attack his enemy once more to advantage. The circumspect caution of General Howe afforded none. After the repulse at Red Bank, his measures were slow but certain; and were calculated to insure the possession of the forts without exposing his troops to the hazard of an assault.

In this state of things, intelligence was received of the successful termination of the northern campaign, in consequence of which great part of the troops who had been employed against Burgoyne, might be drawn to the aid of the army in Pennsylvania. But it was feared that, before these reinforcements could arrive, Sir William Howe would gain possession of the forts, and remove the obstructions to the navigation of the Delaware. This apprehension furnished a strong motive for vigorous attempts to relieve fort Mifflin. But the relative force of the armies, the difficulty of acting offensively against Philadelphia, and above all, the reflection that a defeat might disable him from meeting his enemy in the field even after the arrival of the troops expected from the north, determined General Washington not to hazard a second attack under existing circumstances.

To expedite the reinforcements for which he waited, Colonel Hamilton was despatched to General Gates with directions to represent to him the condition of the armies in Pennsylvania; and to urge him, if he contemplated no other service of more importance, immediately to send the regiments of Massachusetts and New Hampshire to aid the army of the middle department. These orders were not peremptory, because it was possible that some other object (as the capture of New York) still more interesting than the expulsion of General Howe from Philadelphia, might be contemplated by Gates; and Washington meant not to interfere with the accomplishment of such object.

On reaching General Putnam, Colonel Hamilton found that a considerable part of the northern army had joined that officer, but that Gates had detained four brigades at Albany for an expedition intended to be made in the winter against Ticonderoga.

Having made such arrangements with Putnam as he supposed would secure the immediate march of a large body of continental troops from that station, Colonel Hamilton proceeded to Albany for the purpose of remonstrating to General Gates against retaining so large and valuable a part of the army unemployed at a time when the most imminent danger threatened the vitals of the country. Gates was by no means disposed to part with his troops. He could not believe that an expedition then preparing at New York, was designed to reinforce General Howe; and insisted that, should the troops then embarked at that place, instead of proceeding to the Delaware, make a sudden movement up the Hudson, it would be in their power, should Albany be left defenceless, to destroy the valuable arsenal which had been there erected, and the military stores captured with Burgoyne, which had been chiefly deposited in that town.

Having, after repeated remonstrances, obtained an order directing three brigades to the Delaware, Hamilton hastened back to Putnam, and found the troops which had been ordered to join General Washington, still at Peekskill. The detachment from New York had suggested to Putnam the possibility of taking that place; and he does not appear to have made very great exertions to divest himself of a force he deemed necessary for an object the accomplishment of which would give so much splendour to his military character. In addition to this circumstance, an opinion had gained ground among the soldiers that their share of service for the campaign had been performed, and that it was time for them to go into winter quarters. Great discontents too prevailed concerning their pay, which the government had permitted to be more than six months in arrears; and in Poor's brigade, a mutiny broke out, in the course of which a soldier who was run through the body by his captain, before he expired, shot the captain dead who gave the wound. Colonel Hamilton came in time to borrow money from the governor of New York, to put the troops in motion; and they proceeded by brigades to the Delaware. But these several delays retarded their arrival until the contest for the forts on that river was terminated.

The preparations of Sir William Howe being completed, a large battery on Province Island of twenty-four and thirty-two pounders, and two howitzers of eight inches each, opened, early in the morning of the 10th of November, upon fort Mifflin, at the distance of five hundred yards, and kept up an incessant fire for several successive days. The blockhouses were reduced to a heap of ruins; the palisades were beaten down; and most of the guns dismounted and otherwise disabled. The barracks were battered in every part, so that the troops could not remain in them. They were under the necessity of working and watching the whole night to repair the damages of the day, and to guard against a storm, of which they were in perpetual apprehension. If in the day, a few moments were allowed for repose, it was taken on the wet earth, which, in consequence of heavy rains, had become a soft mud. The garrison was relieved by General Varnum every forty-eight hours; but his brigade was so weak that half the men were constantly on duty.

Colonel Smith was decidedly of opinion, and General Varnum concurred with him, that the garrison could not repel an assault, and ought to be withdrawn; but General Washington still cherished the hope that the place might be maintained until he should be reinforced from the northern army. Believing that an assault would not be attempted until the works were battered down, he recommended that the whole night should be employed in making repairs. His orders were that the place should be defended to the last extremity; and never were orders more faithfully executed.

Several of the garrison were killed, and among them Captain Treat, a gallant officer, who commanded the artillery. Colonel Smith received a contusion on his hip and arm which compelled him to give up the command, and retire to Red Bank. Nov. 11. Major Fleury, a French officer of distinguished merit, who served as engineer, reported to the Commander-in-chief that, although the blockhouses were beaten down, all the guns in them, except two, disabled, and several breaches made in the walls, the place was still defensible; but the garrison was so unequal to the numbers required by the extent of the lines, and was so dispirited by watching, fatigue, and constant exposure to the cold rains which were almost incessant that he dreaded the event of an attempt to carry the place by storm. Fresh troops were ordered to their relief from Varnum's brigade, and the command was taken, first by Colonel Russell, and afterwards by Major Thayer. The artillery, commanded by Captain Lee, continued to be well served. The besiegers were several times thrown into confusion, and a floating battery which opened on the morning of the 14th, was silenced in the course of the day.

Nov. 15. The defence being unexpectedly obstinate the assailants brought up their ships as far as the obstructions in the river permitted, and added their fire to that of the batteries which was the more fatal as the cover for the troops had been greatly impaired. The brave garrison, however, still maintained their ground with unshaken firmness. In the midst of this stubborn conflict, the Vigilant and a sloop of war were brought up the inner channel, between Mud and Province Islands, which had, unobserved by the besieged, been deepened by the current in consequence of the obstructions in the main channel; and, taking a station within one hundred yards of the works, not only kept up a destructive cannonade, but threw hand grenades into them; while the musketeers from the round top of the Vigilant killed every man that appeared on the platform.

Major Thayer applied to the Commodore to remove these vessels, and he ordered six galleys on the service; but, after reconnoitring their situation, the galleys returned without attempting any thing. Their report was that these ships were so covered by the batteries on Province Island as to be unassailable.

It was now apparent to all that the fort could be no longer defended. The works were in ruins. The position of the Vigilant rendered any farther continuance on the island a prodigal and useless waste of human life; and on the 16th, about eleven at night, the garrison was withdrawn.[1]

A second attempt was made to drive the vessels from their stations with a determination, should it succeed, to repossess the island; but the galleys effected nothing; and a detachment from Province Island soon occupied the ground which had been abandoned.

The day after receiving intelligence of the evacuation of fort Mifflin, General Washington deputed Generals De Kalb and Knox, to confer with General Varnum and the officers at fort Mercer on the practicability of continuing to defend the obstructions in the channel, to report thereon, and to state the force which would be necessary for that purpose. Their report was in favour of continuing the defence. A council of the navy officers had already been called by the Commodore in pursuance of a request of the Commander-in-chief made before the evacuation had taken place, who were unanimously of opinion that it would be impracticable for the fleet, after the loss of the island, to maintain its station, or to assist in preventing the chevaux-de-frise from being weighed by the ships of the enemy.

General Howe had now completed a line of defence from the Schuylkill to the Delaware; and a reinforcement from New York had arrived at Chester. These two circumstances enabled him to form an army in the Jerseys sufficient for the reduction of fort Mercer, without weakening himself so much in Philadelphia as to put his line in hazard. Still deeming it of the utmost importance to open the navigation of the Delaware completely, he detached Lord Cornwallis about one in the morning of the 17th, with a strong body of troops to Chester. From that place, his lordship crossed over to Billingsport, where he was joined by the reinforcement from New York.

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[1] In stating the defence of Mud Island, the author has availed himself of the journal of Major Fleury.

General Washington received immediate intelligence of the march of this detachment, which he communicated to General Varnum with orders that fort Mercer should be defended to the last extremity. With a view to military operations in that quarter, he ordered one division of the army to cross the river at Burlington, and despatched expresses to the northern troops who were marching on by brigades, directing them to move down the Delaware on its northern side until they should receive farther orders.

Major General Greene, an officer who had been distinguished early in the war by the Commander-in-chief for the solidity of his judgment and his military talents, was selected for this expedition. A hope was entertained that he would be able, not only to protect fort Mercer, but to obtain some decisive advantage over Lord Cornwallis; as the situation of the fort, which his lordship could not invest without placing himself between Timber and Manto Creeks, would expose the assailants to great peril from a respectable force in their rear. But, before Greene could cross the Delaware, Lord Cornwallis approached with an army rendered more powerful than had been expected by the junction of the reinforcement from New York; and fort Mercer was evacuated.

A few of the smaller galleys escaped up the river, and the others were burnt by their crews.

Washington still hoped to recover much of what had been lost. A victory would restore the Jersey shore, and this object was deemed so important, that General Greene's instructions indicated the expectation that he would be in a condition to fight Lord Cornwallis.

The judicious officer feared the reproach of avoiding an action less than the just censure of sacrificing the real interests of his country by engaging the enemy on disadvantageous terms. The numbers of the British exceeded his, even counting his militia as regulars; and he determined to wait for Glover's brigade, which was marching from the north. Before its arrival, Lord Cornwallis took post on Gloucester Point, a point of land making deep into the Delaware, which was entirely under cover of the guns of the ships, from which place he was embarking his baggage and the provisions he had collected for Philadelphia.[1]

Believing that Lord Cornwallis would immediately follow the magazines he had collected, and that the purpose of Sir William Howe was with his united forces, to attack the American army while divided, General Washington ordered Greene to recross the Delaware, and join the army.

Thus after one continued struggle of more than six weeks, in which the continental troops displayed great military virtues, the army in Philadelphia secured itself in the possession of that city, by opening a free communication with the fleet.[2]

While Lord Cornwallis was in Jersey, and General Greene on the Delaware above him, the reinforcements from the north being received, an attack on Philadelphia was strongly pressed by several officers high in rank; and was in some measure urged by that torrent of public opinion, which, if not resisted by a very firm mind, overwhelms the judgment, and by controlling measures not well comprehended, may frequently produce, especially in military transactions, the most disastrous effects.

It was stated to the Commander-in-chief, that his army was now in greater force than he could expect it to be at any future time; that being joined by the troops who had conquered Burgoyne, his own reputation, the reputation of his army, the opinion of congress, and of the nation, required some decisive blow on his part. That the rapid depreciation of the paper currency, by which the resources for carrying on the war were dried up, rendered indispensable some grand effort to bring it to a speedy termination.

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[1] While Lord Cornwallis lay on Gloucester Point, about one hundred and fifty men of Morgan's rifle corps under Lieutenant Colonel Butler, and an equal number of militia, the whole under the Marquis de la Fayette, who still served as a volunteer, attacked a picket consisting of about three hundred men, and drove them with the loss of twenty or thirty killed, and a greater number wounded, quite into their camp; after which the Americans retired without being pursued.

[2] While these transactions were passing on the Delaware, General Dickinson projected another expedition against the post on Staten Island. He collected about two thousand men, and requested General Putnam to make a diversion on the side of Kingsbridge, in order to prevent a reinforcement from New York.

Knowing that success depended on secrecy, he had concealed his object even from his field-officers, until eight of the night in which it was to be executed. Yet by three next morning, information of his design was given to General Skinner, who, being on his guard, saved himself and his brigade, by taking refuge, on the first alarm, in some works too strong to be carried by assault. A few prisoners were made and a few men killed, after which General Dickinson brought off his party with the loss of only three killed and ten slightly wounded.

The plan proposed was, that General Greene should embark two thousand men at Dunk's ferry, and descending the Delaware in the night, land in the town just before day, attack the enemy in the rear, and take possession of the bridge over the Schuylkill. That a strong corps should march down on the west side of that river, occupy the heights enfilading the works of the enemy, and open a brisk cannonade upon them, while a detachment from it should march down to the bridge, and attack in front at the same instant, that the party descending the river should commence its assault on the rear.

Not only the Commander-in-chief, but some of his best officers, those who could not be impelled by the clamours of the ill-informed to ruin the public interests, were opposed to this mad enterprise.

The two armies they said were now nearly equal in point of numbers, and the detachment under Lord Cornwallis could not be supposed to have so weakened Sir William Howe as to compensate for the advantages of his position. His right was covered by the Delaware, his left by the Schuylkill, his rear by the junction of those two rivers, as well as by the city of Philadelphia, and his front by a line of redoubts extending from river to river, and connected by an abbattis, and by circular works. It would be indispensably necessary to carry all these redoubts; since to leave a part of them to play on the rear of the columns, while engaged in front with the enemy in Philadelphia, would be extremely hazardous.

Supposing the redoubts carried, and the British army driven into the town, yet all military men were agreed on the great peril of storming a town. The streets would be defended by an artillery greatly superior to that of the Americans, which would attack in front, while the brick houses would be lined with musketeers whose fire must thin the ranks of the assailants.

A part of the plan, on the successful execution of which the whole depended, was, that the British rear should be surprised by the corps descending the Delaware. This would require the concurrence of too many favourable circumstances to be calculated on with any confidence. As the position of General Greene was known, it could not be supposed that Sir William Howe would be inattentive to him. It was probable that not even his embarkation would be made unnoticed; but it was presuming a degree of negligence which ought not to be assumed, to suppose that he could descend the river to Philadelphia undiscovered. So soon as his movement should be observed, the whole plan would be comprehended, since it would never be conjectured that General Greene was to attack singly.

If the attack in front should fail, which was not even improbable, the total loss of the two thousand men in the rear must follow; and General Howe would maintain his superiority through the winter.

The situation of America did not require these desperate measures. The British general would be compelled to risk a battle on equal terms, or to manifest a conscious inferiority to the American army. The depreciation of paper money was the inevitable consequence of immense emissions without corresponding taxes. It was by removing the cause, not by sacrificing the army, that this evil was to be corrected.

Washington possessed too much discernment to be dazzled by the false brilliant presented by those who urged the necessity of storming Philadelphia, in order to throw lustre round his own fame, and that of his army; and too much firmness of temper, too much virtue and real patriotism, to be diverted from a purpose believed to be right, by the clamours of faction or the discontents of ignorance. Disregarding the importunities of mistaken friends, the malignant insinuations of enemies, and the expectations of the ill-informed; he persevered in his resolution to make no attempt on Philadelphia. He saved his army, and was able to keep the field in the face of his enemy; while the clamour of the moment wasted in air, and is forgotten.

The opinion that Sir William Howe meditated an attack on the American camp, was not ill founded. Scarcely had Lord Cornwallis returned to Philadelphia, and Greene to the American army, when unquestionable intelligence was received that the British general was preparing to march out in full strength, with the avowed object of forcing Washington from his position, and driving him beyond the mountains.

On the 4th of December, Captain M‘Lane, a vigilant officer on the lines, discovered that an attempt to surprise the American camp at White Marsh was about to be made, and communicated the information to the Commander-in-chief. In the evening of the same day, General Howe marched out of Philadelphia with his whole force; and, about eleven at night, M‘Lane, who had been detached with one hundred chosen men, attacked the British van at the Three Mile Run, on the Germantown road, and compelled their front division to change its line of march. He hovered on the front and flank of the advancing army, galling them severely until three next morning, when the British encamped on Chestnut Hill, in front of the American right, and distant from it about three miles. A slight skirmish had also taken place between the Pennsylvania militia under General Irvine, and the advanced light Dec. 6. parties of the enemy, in which the general was wounded, and the militia, without much other loss, were dispersed.

The range of hills on which the British were posted, approached nearer to those occupied by the Americans, as they stretched northward.

Having passed the day in reconnoitring the right, Sir William Howe changed his ground in the course of the night, and moving along the hills to his right, took an advantageous position, about a mile in front of the American left. The next day he inclined still farther to his right, and, in doing so, approached still nearer to the left wing of the American army. Supposing a general engagement to be approaching, Washington Dec. 7. detached Gist with some Maryland militia, and Morgan with his rifle corps, to attack the flanking and advancing parties of the enemy. A sharp action ensued, in which Major Morris, of Jersey, a brave officer in Morgan's regiment, was mortally wounded, and twenty-seven of his men were killed and wounded. A small loss was also sustained in the militia. The parties first attacked were driven in; but the enemy reinforcing in numbers, and Washington, unwilling to move from the heights, and engage on the ground which was the scene of the skirmish, declining to reinforce Gist and Morgan, they, in turn, were compelled to retreat.

Sir William Howe continued to manœuvre towards the flank, and in front of the left wing of the American army. Expecting to be attacked in that quarter in full force, Washington made such changes in the disposition of his troops as the occasion required; and the day was consumed in these movements. In the course of it, the American chief rode through every brigade of his army, delivering, in person, his orders, respecting the manner of receiving the enemy, exhorting his troops to rely principally on the bayonet, and encouraging them by the steady firmness of his countenance, as well as by his words, to a vigorous performance of their duty.[1] The dispositions of the evening indicated an intention to attack him the ensuing morning; but in the afternoon of the eighth, the British suddenly filed off from their right, which extended beyond the American left, and retreated to Philadelphia. The parties detached to harass their rear could not overtake it.

The loss of the British in this expedition, as stated in the official letter of General Howe, rather exceeded one hundred in killed, wounded, and missing; and was sustained principally in the skirmish of the 7th, in which Major Morris fell.

On one former occasion had the two armies met, uncovered by works, with superior numbers on the side of the Americans. The effective force of the British was then stated at twelve thousand men. It has been since declared by an author [2] who then belonged to it, but who, though a candid writer, appears to have imbibed prejudices against Sir William Howe, to have amounted to fourteen thousand. The American army consisted of precisely twelve thousand one hundred and sixty-one continental troops, and three thousand two hundred and forty-one militia. This equality in point of numbers, rendered it a prudent precaution to maintain a superiority of position. As the two armies occupied heights fronting each other, neither could attack without giving to its adversary some advantage in the ground; and this was an advantage which neither seemed willing to relinquish.

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[1] The author states this on his own observation.

[2] Stedman.

The return of Sir William Howe to Philadelphia without bringing on an action, after marching out with the avowed intention of fighting, is the best testimony of the respect which he felt for the talents of his adversary, and the courage of the troops he was to encounter.

The cold was now becoming so intense that it was impossible for an army neither well clothed, nor sufficiently supplied with blankets, longer to keep the field in tents. It had become necessary to place the troops in winter quarters; but in the existing state of things the choice of winter quarters was a subject for serious reflection. It was impossible to place them in villages without uncovering the country, or exposing them to the hazard of being beaten in detachment.

To avoid these calamities, it was determined to take a strong position in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, equally distant from the Delaware above and below that city; and there to construct huts, in the form of a regular encampment, which might cover the army during the winter. A strong piece of ground at Valley Forge, on the west side of the Schuylkill, between twenty and thirty miles from Philadelphia, was selected for that purpose; and some time before day on the morning of the 11th of December, the army marched to take possession of it. By an accidental concurrence of circumstances, Lord Cornwallis had been detached the same morning at the head of a strong corps, on a foraging party on the west side of the Schuylkill. He had fallen in with a brigade of Pennsylvania militia commanded by General Potter, which he soon dispersed; and, pursuing the fugitives, had gained the heights opposite Matron's ford, over which the Americans had thrown a bridge for the purpose of crossing the river, and had posted troops to command the defile called the Gulph, just as the front division of the American army reached the bank of the river. This movement had been made without any knowledge of the intention of General Washington to change his position, or any design of contesting the passage of the Schuylkill; but the troops had been posted in the manner already mentioned for the sole purpose of covering the foraging party.

Washington apprehended, from his first intelligence, that General Howe had taken the field in full force. He therefore recalled the troops already on the west side, and moved rather higher up the river, for the purpose of understanding the real situation, force, and designs of the enemy. The next day Lord Cornwallis returned to Philadelphia; and, in the course of the night, the American army crossed the river. Dec. 12.

Here the Commander-in-chief communicated to his army, in general orders, the manner in which he intended to dispose of them during the winter. He expressed, in strong terms, his approbation of their conduct, presented them with an encouraging state of the future prospects of their country, exhorted them to bear with continuing fortitude the hardships inseparable from the position they were about to take, and endeavoured to convince their judgments that those hardships were not imposed on them by unfeeling caprice, but were necessary for the good of their country.

The winter had set in with great severity, and the sufferings of the army were extreme. In a few days, however, these sufferings were considerably diminished by the erection of logged huts, filled up with mortar, which, after being dried, formed comfortable habitations, and gave content to men long unused to the conveniences of life. The order of a regular encampment was observed; and the only appearance of winter quarters, was the substitution of huts for tents.

CHAPTER X

WHILE, with inferior numbers, General Washington maintained a stubborn contest in the middle states, events of great variety and importance were passing in the north. 1777.

After Sir Guy Carleton had distributed his army, for winter quarters, in the several villages from the Isle Aux Noix and Montreal to Quebec, General Burgoyne, who had served under him, embarked for England, in order to communicate a full statement of affairs in the northern department; and to assist in making arrangements for the ensuing campaign. The American army, having been formed for only one year, dissolved of itself at the expiration of that term, and could scarcely furnish even the appearance of garrisons in their forts.

The defence of this frontier was assigned to the regiments directed to be raised in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and the north western parts of New York; but the recruiting service advanced so slowly, and so much difficulty was found in clothing and arming those who were enlisted, that it became indispensable to call in the aid of the militia; and the plan of the campaign on the part of the British was involved in so much obscurity that General Washington deemed it adviseable to direct eight of the regiments of Massachusetts to rendezvous at Peekskill.

The service of General Schuyler in the northern department had been more solid than brilliant. Dissatisfied with his situation, and disgusted with the injustice[1] he supposed himself to experience, he had for some time meditated a resignation, and had been retained in the service only by the deep interest he felt in the struggle of his country for independence. So soon as his fears for Ticonderoga were removed by the partial opening of Lake Champlain, he waited in person on congress for the purpose of adjusting his accounts, obtaining an inquiry into his conduct, and supporting those necessary measures of defence in the north, which were suggested by his perfect knowledge of the country. At his request, a committee, consisting of a member from each state, was appointed to inquire into his conduct during the time he had held a command in the army. The arduous services performed by this meritorious officer, when investigated, were found so far to exceed any estimate which had been made of them, that congress deemed it essential to the public interest to prevail on him to retain his commission. The resolution which fixed his head quarters at Albany was repealed, and he was directed to proceed forthwith to the northern department, and to take the command of it.

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[1] When the command of the operating army was given to General Thomas in March 1776, the head quarters of General Schuyler had been fixed by congress at Albany, and that resolution remained in force. General Gates was now directed to repair to Ticonderoga and take command of the army; and Major General St. Clair was ordered to the same place to serve under him.

May 22.

On his arrival, he found the army of the north not only too weak for the objects entrusted to it, but badly supplied with arms, clothes, and provisions. From a spy who had been seized near Onion River, he obtained information that General Burgoyne was at Quebec, and was to command the British forces in that department so soon as they should march out of Canada. That while Ticonderoga should be attacked by the main army, Sir John Johnson, with a strong body of British, Canadians, and Indians, was to penetrate to the Mohawk by Oswego, and place himself between fort Stanwix and fort Edward.

General Schuyler was sensible of the danger which threatened him, and made every exertion to meet it. After completing his arrangements at Ticonderoga for sustaining a siege, he had proceeded to Albany, for the purpose of attending to his supplies, and of expediting the march of reinforcements, when he received intelligence from General St. Clair, who was entrusted with the defence of Ticonderoga, that Burgoyne had appeared before that place.

In the course of the preceding winter, a plan for penetrating to the Hudson, from Canada, by the way of the lakes, had been digested in the cabinet of London. General Burgoyne, who assisted in forming it, was entrusted with its execution, and was to lead a formidable army against Ticonderoga as soon as the season would permit. At the same time a smaller party under Colonel St. Leger, composed of Canadians, newly raised Americans, and a few Europeans, aided by a powerful body of Indians, was to march from Oswego, to enter the country by the way of the Mohawk, and to join the grand army on the Hudson.

Burgoyne reached Quebec as soon as it was practicable to sail up the St. Lawrence, and appeared in full force on the river Bouquet, on the western banks of lake Champlain, much earlier than the American general had supposed to be possible. June 22. At this place he met the Indians in a grand council, after which he gave them a war feast. Much of the cruelty afterwards perpetrated by the savages has been attributed to this unfortunate officer; but justice requires the admission that his speech was calculated rather to diminish than increase their habitual ferocity. He endeavoured to impress on them the distinction between enemies in the field, and the unarmed inhabitants, many of whom were friends; and, addressing himself to their avarice, promised rewards for prisoners, but none for scalps. It was perhaps fortunate for America, that, in some instances, peculiarly calculated to excite and interest the human feelings, these feeble restraints were disregarded.

After publishing a manifesto at Putnam River, designed to act on the hopes and fears of the people of the country through which he was to pass, he halted a few days at Crown Point, to make the necessary dispositions for investing Ticonderoga.

From Crown Point, the royal army advanced on both sides the lake, keeping up a communication between its divisions, by means of the fleet; and on the 1st of July encamped within four miles of the American works. A strong party was pushed forward to Three Mile Point; and the fleet anchored just beyond the range of the guns of the fort. The next day they took possession, without opposition, of the important post at Mount Hope, which commanded, in part, the lines on the northern side, and entirely cut off the communication with lake George.

The weakness of his garrison induced General St. Clair, to give up this post without a struggle. Believing it to be impracticable to support it without hazarding a general action, he determined to concentrate his force about Ticonderoga and Mount Independence.

After taking possession of Mount Hope, the British lines were extended on the western side of Champlain, from the mountain quite to the lake, so as completely to inclose the garrison on that side. The German division under Major General Reidisel, which occupied the eastern shore of the lake, was encamped at Three Mile Point, and had pushed forward a detachment near the rivulet, which runs east of Mount Independence.

The besiegers laboured assiduously to bring up their artillery and complete their works. Sugar Hill, a rugged mountain standing at the confluence of the waters that unite at Ticonderoga, which overlooks the fortress and had been thought inaccessible, was examined; and the report being that the ascent, though extremely difficult, was practicable, the work was immediately commenced, and was pressed with so much vigour that the batteries might have opened next day. The garrison was not in a condition to check these operations.

The situation of St. Clair was now at its crisis. Only the ground between the Eastern run and the South river remained open; and this he was informed would be occupied the next day, so that the investment would be complete. The place must be immediately evacuated, or maintained at the hazard of losing the garrison when it should be no longer tenable.

Between these cruel alternatives, General St. Clair did not hesitate to choose the first; but deeming it prudent to take the advice of a council of war, he convened the general officers, who unanimously advised the immediate evacuation of the fort.

Preparations for the retreat were instantly commenced. The invalids, the hospital, and such stores as could be moved in the course of the night, were put on board the batteaux, which proceeded under the guard of Colonel Long, up the South river to Skeensborough; and, before day on the morning of the 6th of July, the main body of the army directed its march to the same place.

In the hope of making considerable progress before his retreat should be discovered, General St. Clair had ordered the troops to observe the most profound silence, and, particularly, to set nothing on fire. These judicious orders were disobeyed; and, before the rear guard was in motion, the house which had been occupied by General De Fermoy was in flames. This served as a signal to the besiegers, who immediately entered the works. The main body of the retreating army was rapidly pursued by Generals Frazer and Reidisel, while General Burgoyne, in person, followed the detachment under Colonel Long.

The bridge, the boom, and those other works, the construction of which had employed the labour of ten months, were cut through by nine in the morning, so as to afford a passage for the Royal George and Inflexible frigates, as well as for the gun boats, which engaged the American galleys, about three in the afternoon, near the falls of Skeensborough.

In the mean time, three regiments had disembarked at some distance from the fort, with the intention of attacking it by land, and cutting off the retreat of the garrison, as well as that of the detachment in the boats and galleys. This manœuvre being discovered, the works and batteaux were set on fire, and the troops retired to fort Anne. On this occasion, the baggage of the army, and a great quantity of military stores were either destroyed by the Americans, or taken by the British.

Knowing that he could save his army only by the rapidity of his march, General St. Clair reached Castletown, thirty miles from Ticonderoga, on the night succeeding the evacuation of the fort. The rear guard under Colonel Warner halted six miles short of that place. Having been augmented by those who from excessive fatigue had fallen out of the line of march, it amounted to rather more than one thousand men.

The next morning at five, they were overtaken and attacked by General Frazer with eight hundred and fifty men. The action was warm and well contested. In its commencement, two regiments of militia, which lay within two miles of Colonel Warner, were ordered to his assistance. July 7. Instead of obeying these orders, they consulted their own safety, and hastened to Castletown. Had these orders been executed, the corps which attacked Warner would probably have been cut to pieces. While the action was maintained with equal spirit on both sides, General Reidisel arrived with his division of Germans, and the Americans were routed.

In this action, Colonel Francis, several other officers, and upwards of two hundred men were left dead on the field; and one colonel, seven captains, ten subalterns, and two hundred and ten privates were made prisoners. Near six hundred are supposed to have been wounded, many of whom must have perished in attempting to escape through the woods towards the inhabited country. The British state their own loss at thirty-five killed, among whom was one field officer, and one hundred and forty-four wounded, including two majors, and five inferior officers. It is scarcely credible, notwithstanding the difference in arms, that in a well contested action, the disparity in the killed could have been so considerable. It is the less probable, as the pursuit was not of long continuance.

To avoid that division of the British army which had proceeded up the North River, St. Clair changed his route; and directed his march to Rutland, to which place he ordered Warner also to retire. At Rutland he fell in with several soldiers who had been separated from their corps; and, two days afterwards, at Manchester, was joined by Warner with about ninety men. From this place he proceeded to fort Edward, where he met General Schuyler.

After taking possession of Skeensborough, Burgoyne had found it necessary to suspend the pursuit, and to give his army refreshment. The troops were in some disorder; distinct corps were intermingled, and his detachments were far apart from each other. He determined therefore to halt a few days at that place, in order to reassemble and arrange him army.

Colonel Long having been directed to defend fort Anne, the ninth regiment of British, under Lieutenant Colonel Hill, had been detached against that place. It being understood that the Americans were in some force, two other regiments, under Brigadier Powell, were ordered to support the first party. Before the arrival of this reinforcement, Colonel Long attacked the ninth regiment, and a sharp skirmish ensued, in which the British kept their ground, and the advantage was claimed by both parties. Hearing that a reinforcement was approaching, Long set fire to the works at fort Anne, and retired to fort Edward.

At Stillwater, on his way to Ticonderoga, General Schuyler was informed of the evacuation of that place; and, on the same day, at Saratoga, of the loss of the stores at Skeensborough. He had heard nothing from General St. Clair; and was seriously apprehensive for that officer and his army, which, after the junction of Colonel Long, consisted of about fifteen hundred continental troops, and the same number of militia. They were dispirited by defeat, without tents, badly armed, and had lost great part of their stores and baggage. The country was generally much alarmed; and even the well affected discovered more inclination to take care of themselves than to join the army. In this gloomy state of things, no officer could have exerted more diligence and skill than were displayed by Schuyler. Having fixed his head quarters at fort Edward, he employed to the utmost advantage the short respite from action which Burgoyne unavoidably gave. The country between Skeensborough and fort Edward was almost entirely unsettled, was covered with thick woods, and of a surface extremely rough, and much intersected with creeks and morasses. Wood creek was navigable with batteaux as far as fort Anne; and military stores of every description might be transported up it. He obstructed its navigation by sinking numerous impediments in its course, broke up the bridges, and rendered the roads impassable. He was also indefatigable in driving the live stock out of the way, and in bringing from fort George to fort Edward, the ammunition and other military stores which had been deposited at that place. Still farther to delay the movements of the British, he posted Colonel Warner on their left flank, with instructions to raise the militia in that quarter. The hope was entertained, that the appearance of a respectable force, threatening the flank and rear of the invading army, would not only retard its advance, but would induce General Burgoyne to weaken it, in order to strengthen the garrison of Ticonderoga.

While thus endeavouring to obstruct the march of the enemy, Schuyler was not less attentive to the best means of strengthening his own army. Reinforcements of regular troops were earnestly solicited; the militia of New England and New York were required to take the field, and all his influence in the surrounding country was exerted to reanimate the people, and to prevent their defection from the American cause.

While at Skeensborough General Burgoyne issued a second proclamation[1] summoning the people of the adjacent country to send ten deputies from each township to meet Colonel Skeene at Castletown, in order to deliberate on such measures as might still be adopted to save those who had not yet conformed to his first, and submitted to the royal authority. General Schuyler apprehending some effect from this paper, issued a counter proclamation, stating the insidious designs of the enemy. Warning the inhabitants, by the example of Jersey, of the danger to which their yielding to this seductive proposition would expose them, and giving them the most solemn assurances that all who should send deputies to this meeting, or in any manner aid the enemy, would be considered as traitors, and should suffer the utmost rigour of the law.

The evacuation of Ticonderoga was a shock for which no part of the United States was prepared. Neither the strength of the invading army, nor of the garrison had been understood. When therefore intelligence was received that a place, on the fortifications of which much money and labour had been expended, which was considered as the key to the whole north-western country, and supposed to contain a garrison nearly equal to the invading army, had been abandoned without a siege; that an immense train of artillery, and all the military stores, had either fallen into the hands of the enemy, or been destroyed; that the army, on its retreat, had been attacked, defeated, and dispersed; astonishment pervaded all ranks of men; and the conduct of the officers was universally condemned. Congress recalled all the generals of the department, and directed an inquiry into their conduct. Throughout New England especially, the most bitter aspersions were cast on them; and General Schuyler, who, from some unknown cause, had never been viewed with favour in that part of the continent, was involved in the common charge of treachery, to which this accumulation of unlooked for calamity was generally attributed by the mass of the people.

On the representations of General Washington, the recall of the officers was suspended, until he should be of opinion that the service would not suffer by the measure; and, on a full inquiry afterwards made into their conduct, they were acquitted of all blame.

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[1] Remem.

In a letter of St. Clair to the Commander-in-chief, stating his motives for evacuating Ticonderoga, he represented the strength of his garrison, including nine hundred militia, who would consent to stay but a few days, at only three thousand effective rank and file, many of whom were without bayonets. The lines required ten thousand to man them properly. He also affirmed, that his supply of provisions was sufficient for only twenty days, and that the works on the Ticonderoga side were incomplete, with their flanks undefended. He justified his having failed to call in a larger reinforcement of militia, by the scarcity of provisions, the supply on hand not having been procured until General Schuyler had resumed the command in the department; and attributed his not having evacuated the place in time to preserve his army and stores, to the prevalent opinion that there was not a sufficient force in Canada to attempt so hardy an enterprise, and to his not being at liberty to adopt that measure but in the last necessity.

A court of inquiry justified his conduct, and he retained the confidence of the Commander-in-chief.

On learning the distressed state of the remnant of the army, General Washington made great exertions to repair its losses, and to reinforce it. The utmost industry was used to procure a supply of tents; artillery and ammunition were forwarded from Massachusetts; the remaining troops of that state were ordered to that department; and General Lincoln, who possessed, in a high degree, the confidence of the New England militia, was directed to raise and command them. General Arnold, so often distinguished for his gallantry in the field, was ordered to the northern army, in the hope that his presence and reputation might reanimate the troops; and Colonel Morgan, with his corps of riflemen, was detached on the same service. Through the present dark gloom, Washington discerned a ray of light, and already cherished the hope that much good might result from present evil. "The evacuation of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence," said he in a letter of the 15th of July, to General Schuyler, "is an event of chagrin and surprise, not apprehended, nor within the compass of my reasoning. This stroke is severe indeed, and has distressed us much. But, notwithstanding things at present wear a dark and gloomy aspect, I hope a spirited opposition will check the progress of General Burgoyne's arms, and that the confidence derived from success will hurry him into measures that will, in their consequences, be favourable to us. We should never despair. Our situation has before been unpromising, and has changed for the better. So, I trust, it will again. If new difficulties arise, we must only put forth new exertions, and proportion our efforts to the exigency of the times."

On receiving a letter from General Schuyler of the seventeenth, stating the divided situation of the British army, he seemed to anticipate the event which afterwards occurred, and to suggest the measure in which originated that torrent of misfortune with which Burgoyne was overwhelmed. "Though our affairs," he said in reply to this information, "have for some days past worn a dark and gloomy aspect, I yet look forward to a fortunate and happy change. I trust General Burgoyne's army will meet, sooner or later, an effectual check; and, as I suggested before, that the success he has met with will precipitate his ruin. From your accounts, he appears to be pursuing that line of conduct which, of all others, is most favourable to us. I mean acting in detachment. This conduct will certainly give room for enterprise on our part, and expose his parties to great hazard. Could we be so happy as to cut one of them off, though it should not exceed four, five, or six hundred men, it would inspirit the people, and do away much of their present anxiety. In such an event, they would lose sight of past misfortune; and, urged at the same time by a regard for their own security, would fly to arms, and afford every aid in their power."

After allowing a short repose to his army, General Burgoyne proceeded with ardour to the remaining objects of the campaign. The toils and delays which must be encountered in reaching the Hudson were soon perceived. He found it necessary to open Wood creek, and to repair the roads and bridges which Schuyler had broken up. Such was the unavoidable delay of this difficult operation, that the army did not arrive on the Hudson, in the neighbourhood of fort Edward, till the fourteenth of July. At this place it was necessary again to halt, in order to bring artillery, provisions, batteaux, and other articles from fort George.

The time afforded by this delay had been employed by Schuyler to the utmost advantage. Some reinforcements of continental troops had arrived from Peekskill, and the militia had been assembled; but his strength did not yet afford a reasonable prospect of success in a contest with the enemy opposed to him. On this account, as Burgoyne approached fort Edward, Schuyler retired over the Hudson to Saratoga, and soon afterwards to Stillwater, not far from the mouth of the Mohawk. At this place, General Lincoln, who had been detached to take command of the militia assembling at Manchester, was ordered to rejoin him, and he fortified his camp in the hope of being strong enough to defend it.

At Stillwater, information was obtained that Burgoyne had evacuated Castletown; so that the only communication with Ticonderoga, whence nearly all his supplies were drawn, was through lake George; and that the garrison of that important place had been reduced to three hundred men. In consequence of this intelligence, the orders to General Lincoln were countermanded, and he was directed with the militia of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and of the Grants, making, as was understood, a total of between two and three thousand men, to place himself in the rear of the British army, and cut off its communication with the lakes. Here too he was informed that Colonel St. Leger, with a large body of Indians, in addition to his regulars, had penetrated from Oswego, by the way of the Oneida lake and Wood creek, to the Mohawk, where he had laid siege to fort Schuyler, and had totally defeated General Herkimer, who had raised the militia of Tryon county, in order to relieve the fort. The importance of protecting the inhabitants from the savages, and of preventing a junction between St. Leger and Burgoyne, and the consequent loss of the country on the Mohawk, determined Schuyler, weak as he was, to detach Major General Arnold with three continental regiments to raise the siege. The army was so enfeebled by this measure, that its removal to a place of greater security became necessary, and it was withdrawn to some islands in the confluence of the Hudson and the Mohawk, where the camp was deemed more defensible. Burgoyne had Aug. 15. now marched down the east side of the Hudson, and his advanced parties had crossed the river, and occupied the ground at Saratoga.

On the 3d of August, after a message vaunting of his strength, and demanding a surrender, which was answered by a declaration that the fort would be defended to the last extremity, St. Leger invested fort Schuyler. The garrison amounted to six hundred men, all continental troops, who were commanded by Colonel Gansevoort. The besieging army rather exceeded fifteen hundred, of whom from six to nine hundred were Indians.

On the approach of the enemy, General Herkimer, who commanded the militia of Tryon county, assembled them in considerable numbers, and gave information to the garrison, about eleven in the morning of the sixth, of his intention to force a passage that day through the besieging army. Gansevoort determined to favour the execution of this design by a vigorous sortie; and upwards of two hundred men, to be commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Willet, were drawn out for that purpose.

Unfortunately St. Leger received information the preceding day of Herkimer's approach, and, early in the morning, placed a strong party, composed of regulars and Indians, in ambuscade on the road along which he was to march. His first notice of it was given by a heavy discharge of small arms, which was followed by a furious attack from the Indians with their tomahawks. He defended himself with resolution; but was defeated with great slaughter. The general and several of the field officers were wounded; and many others, among whom were several persons of distinction, were killed or taken prisoners. The loss was estimated at four hundred men. The destruction was prevented from being still more complete, by the very timely sortie made by Lieutenant Colonel Willet, which checked the pursuit, and recalled those engaged in it to the defence of their own camp.

As soon as Gansevoort understood that Herkimer was advancing, the sortie which he had planned was made. Lieutenant Colonel Willet fell on the camp of the besiegers, and routed them at the first onset. After driving them, some into the woods, and others over the river, he returned to the fort without the loss of a man.

Burgoyne had received early intimation of the arrival of St. Leger before fort Schuyler; and was aware of the advantage to be derived from an immediate and rapid movement down the Hudson. But the obstacles to his progress multiplied daily, and each step produced new embarrassments. Not more than one-third of the horses expected from Canada had arrived; and Schuyler had been active in removing the draft cattle of the country. With unremitting exertion, he had been able to transport from fort George to the Hudson, a distance of eighteen miles, only twelve batteaux, and provisions for four days in advance. The defectiveness of his means to feed his army until it should reach the abundant country below him, presented an impediment to his farther progress, not readily to be surmounted. The difficulty of drawing supplies from fort George would increase every day with the increasing distance; and the communications, already endangered by a considerable body of militia assembling at White Creek, could be secured only by larger detachments from his army than he was in a condition to make. These were strong inducements to attempt some other mode of supply.

It was well known that large magazines of provisions for the use of the American army were collected at Bennington, which place was generally guarded by militia, whose numbers varied from day to day. The possession of these magazines would enable him to prosecute his ulterior plans without relying for supplies from Lake George; and he determined to seize them.

To try the affections of the country, to complete a corps of loyalists, and to mount Reidisel's dragoons, were subordinate objects of the expedition.[1] Lieutenant Colonel Baum with five hundred Europeans, and a body of American loyalists, was detached on this service.

To facilitate the enterprise, and be ready to take advantage of its success, Burgoyne moved down the east side of the Hudson, and threw a bridge of rafts over that river for the passage of his van, which took post at Saratoga. At the same time Lieutenant Colonel Brechman, with his corps, was advanced to Batten Hill, in order, if necessary, to support Colonel Baum.[1]

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[1] Letter of Burgoyne.

On approaching Bennington, Baum discovered that he should have to encounter a much more considerable force than had been suspected. The New Hampshire militia, commanded by General Starke, had reached that place on their way to camp; and, uniting with Colonel Warner, made in the whole about two thousand men.

Perceiving his danger, Baum halted about four miles from Bennington, and despatched an express for a reinforcement. In the mean time, he strengthened his position by intrenchments.

Lieutenant Colonel Brechman was immediately ordered to his assistance; but, such was the state of the roads that, though the distance was only twenty-four miles, and his march was pressed unremittingly from eight in the morning of the 15th, he did not reach the ground on which Baum had encamped, until four in the afternoon of the next day.[2]

In the mean time, General Starke determined to attack him in his intrenchments. So confident were the provincials belonging to this party, of the attachment of the country to the royal cause, that the American troops, while making their dispositions for the attack, were mistaken for armed friends coming to join them. On discovering his error, Baum prepared for the contest, and made a gallant defence. His works however were carried by storm, and great part of his detachment killed, or taken prisoners. A few escaped into the woods, and saved themselves by flight.

Brechman arrived during the pursuit, and obtained from the fugitives, the first intelligence of the disaster which had befallen them. He immediately attacked the parties of militia who were engaged in the pursuit, and gained some advantage over them. Fortunately for the Americans, Colonel Warner[3] came up at this critical juncture with his continental regiment, and restored, and continued the action, until the main body of the militia reassembled, and came to support him. Brechman in turn was compelled to retire; but he maintained the engagement until dark, when, abandoning his artillery and baggage, he saved his party under cover of the night.

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[1] Letter of Burgoyne.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Gordon.

One thousand stand of arms, and nine hundred swords were taken in this battle. General Burgoyne represented his loss in men at about four hundred; but thirty-two officers, and five hundred and sixty-four privates, including Canadians and loyalists, were made prisoners. The number of the dead was not ascertained, because the action with Brechman had been fought in the woods, and been continued for several miles.

The British general therefore must have included in his estimate of loss, only his European troops.

This important success was soon followed by another of equal influence on the fate of the campaign.

Fort Schuyler had been fortified with more skill, and was defended with more courage, than St. Leger had expected. His artillery made no impression on its walls; and his Indians, who were much better pleased with obtaining plunder and scalps, than besieging fortresses, became intractable, and manifested great disgust with the service. In this temper, they understood that Arnold was advancing with a large body of continental troops; and, soon afterwards were told that Burgoyne and his army had been totally defeated; a report probably founded on the affair at Bennington. Unwilling to share the misfortune of their friends, they manifested a determination not to await the arrival of Arnold. The efforts of St. Leger to detain them being ineffectual, many of them decamped immediately, and the rest threatened to follow.

The time for deliberation was past. The camp was broken up with indications of excessive alarm. The tents were left standing; and the artillery, with great part of the baggage, ammunition, and provisions, fell into the hands of the Americans. The retreating army was pursued by a detachment from the garrison; and it was stated by deserters, that the Indians plundered the remaining baggage of the officers, and massacred such soldiers as could not keep up with the line of march. St. Leger returned to Montreal, whence he proceeded to Ticonderoga, with the intention of joining General Burgoyne by that route.

The decisive victory at Bennington, and the retreat of St.

Leger from fort Schuyler, however important in themselves, were still more so in their consequences. An army, which had spread terror and dismay in every direction, which had, previously, experienced no reverse of fortune, was considered as already beaten; and the opinion became common, that the appearance of the great body of the people in arms, would secure the emancipation of their country. It was too an advantage of no inconsiderable importance resulting from this change of public opinion, that the disaffected became timid, and the wavering who, had the torrent of success continued, would have made a merit of contributing their aid to the victor, were no longer disposed to put themselves and their fortunes in hazard, to support an army whose fate was so uncertain.

The barbarities which had been perpetrated by the Indians belonging to the invading armies, excited still more resentment than terror. As the prospect of revenge began to open, their effect became the more apparent; and their influence on the royal cause was the more sensibly felt because they had been indiscriminate.

The murder of Miss M'Crea passed through all the papers of the continent: and the story, being retouched by the hand of more than one master, excited a peculiar degree of sensibility.[1] But there were other causes of still greater influence in producing the events which afterwards took place. The last reinforcements of continental troops arrived in camp about this time, and added both courage and strength to the army. The harvest, which had detained the northern militia upon their farms, was over; and General Schuyler, whose continued and eminent services had not exempted him from the imputation of being a traitor, was succeeded by General Gates, who possessed a large share of the public confidence.

When Schuyler was directed by congress to resume the command of the northern department, Gates withdrew himself from it. When the resolution passed recalling the general officers who had served in that department, General Washington was requested to name a successor to Schuyler. On his expressing a wish to decline this nomination, and representing the inconvenience of removing all the general officers, Gates was again directed to repair thither and take the command, and their resolution to recall the brigadiers was suspended until the Commander-in-chief should be of opinion that it might be carried into effect with safety.

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[1] See note No. IX. at the end of the volume.

Schuyler retained the command until the arrival of Gates, which was on the 19th of August, and continued his exertions to restore the affairs of the department, though he felt acutely the disgrace of being recalled in this critical and interesting state of the campaign. "It is" said he, in a letter to the Commander-in-chief, "matter of extreme chagrin to me to be deprived of the command at a time when, soon if ever, we shall probably be enabled to face the enemy; when we are on the point of taking ground [1] where they must attack to a disadvantage, should our force be inadequate to facing them in the field; when an opportunity will, in all probability, occur, in which I might evince that I am not what congress have too plainly insinuated by taking the command from me."

If error be attributable to the evacuation of Ticonderoga, no portion of it was committed by Schuyler. His removal from the command was probably severe and unjust as respected himself; but perhaps wise as respected America. The frontier towards the lakes was to be defended by the troops of New England; and, however unfounded their prejudices against him might be, it was prudent to consult them.

Notwithstanding the difficulties which multiplied around him, Burgoyne remained steady to his purpose. The disasters at Bennington and on the Mohawk produced no disposition to abandon the enterprise and save his army.

It had now become necessary to recur to the slow and toilsome mode of obtaining supplies from fort George. Having, with persevering labour, collected provision for thirty days in advance, he crossed the Hudson on the 13th and 14th of September, and encamped on the heights and plains of Saratoga, with a determination to decide the fate of the expedition in a general engagement.

General Gates, having been joined by all the continental troops destined for the northern department, and reinforced by large bodies of militia, had moved from his camp in the islands, and advanced to the neighbourhood of Stillwater.

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[1] The islands in the mouth of the Mohawk.

The bridges between the two armies having been broken down, the roads being excessively bad, and the country covered with wood, the progress of the British army down the river was slow. On the night of the 17th, Burgoyne encamped within four miles of the American army, and the next day was employed in repairing the bridges between the two camps.[1] In the morning of the 19th he advanced in full force towards the American left. Morgan was immediately detached with his corps to observe the enemy, and to harass his front and flanks. He fell in with a picket in front of the right wing, which he attacked with vivacity, and drove in upon the main body. Pursuing with too much ardour, he was met in considerable force, and, after a severe encounter, was compelled, in turn, to retire in some disorder. Two regiments being advanced to his assistance, his corps was rallied, and the action became more general. The Americans were formed in a wood, with an open field in front, and invariably repulsed the British corps which attacked them; but when they pursued those corps to the main body, they were in turn driven back to their first ground. Reinforcements were continually brought up, and about four in the afternoon, upwards of three thousand American troops[2] were closely engaged with the whole right wing of the British army commanded by General Burgoyne in person. The conflict was extremely severe, and only terminated with the day. At dark, the Americans retired to their camp, and the British, who had found great difficulty in maintaining their ground, lay all night on their arms near the field of battle.

In this action the killed and wounded on the part of the Americans were between three and four hundred. Among the former were Colonels Coburn and Adams, and several other valuable officers. The British loss has been estimated at rather more than five hundred men.

Each army claimed the victory; and each believed itself to have beaten near the whole of the hostile army with only a part of its own force. The advantage however, taking all circumstances into consideration, was decidedly with the Americans. In a conflict which nearly consumed the day, they found themselves at least equal to their antagonists. In every quarter they had acted on the offensive; and, after an encounter for several hours, had not lost an inch of ground. They had not been driven from the field, but had retired from it at the close of day, to the camp from which they had marched to battle. Their object, which was to check the advancing enemy, had been obtained; while that of the British General had failed. In the actual state of things, to fight without being beaten was, on their part, victory; while, on the part of the British, to fight without a decisive victory, was defeat. The Indians, who found themselves beaten in the woods by Morgan, and restrained from scalping and plundering the unarmed by Burgoyne, who saw before them the prospect of hard fighting without profit, grew tired of the service, and deserted in great numbers. The Canadians and Provincials were not much more faithful; and Burgoyne soon perceived that his hopes must rest almost entirely on his European troops.

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[1] Letter of Burgoyne.

[2] The accounts of the day stated that the Americans were commanded by General Arnold, but General Wilkinson says that no general officer was in the field.

With reason, therefore, this action was celebrated throughout the United States as a victory, and considered as the precursor of the total ruin of the invading army. The utmost exultation was displayed, and the militia were stimulated to fly to arms, and complete the work so happily begun.

General Lincoln, in conformity with directions which have been stated, had assembled a considerable body of New England militia in the rear of Burgoyne, from which he drew three parties of about five hundred men each. One of these was detached under the command of Colonel Brown, to the north end of lake George, principally to relieve a number of prisoners who were confined there, but with orders to push his success, should he be fortunate, as far as prudence would admit. Colonel Johnson, at the head of another party, marched towards Mount Independence, and Colonel Woodbury, with a third, was detached to Skeensborough to cover the retreat of both the others. With the residue, Lincoln proceeded to the camp of Gates.

Colonel Brown, after marching all night, arrived, at the break of day, on the north end of the lake, where he found a small post which he carried without opposition. The surprise was complete; and he took possession of Mount Defiance, Mount Hope, the landing place, and about two hundred batteaux. With the loss of only three killed and five wounded, he liberated one hundred American prisoners, and captured two hundred and ninety-three of the enemy. This success was joyfully proclaimed through the northern states. It was believed confidently that Ticonderoga and Mount Independence were recovered; and the militia were exhorted, by joining their brethren in the army, to insure that event if it had not already happened.

The attempt on those places however failed. The garrison repulsed the assailants; who, after a few days, abandoned the siege. On their return through lake George in the vessels they had captured, the militia made an attack on Diamond Island, the depot of all the stores collected at the north end of the lake. Being again repulsed, they destroyed the vessels they had taken, and returned to their former station.

The day after the battle of Stillwater, General Burgoyne took a position almost within cannon shot of the American camp, fortified his right, and extended his left to the river. Directly after taking this ground he received a letter from Sir Henry Clinton, informing him that he should attack fort Montgomery about the 20th of September. The messenger returned with information that Burgoyne was in extreme difficulty, and would endeavour to wait for aid until the 12th of October.[1]

Both armies retained their position until the 7th of October. Burgoyne, in the hope of being relieved by Sir Henry Clinton; and Gates, in the confidence of growing stronger every day.

Having received no farther intelligence from Sir Henry, and being reduced to the necessity of diminishing the ration issued to his soldiers, the British General determined to make one more trial of strength with his adversary. In execution of this determination, he drew out on his right fifteen hundred choice troops, whom he commanded in person, assisted by Generals Philips, Reidisel, and Frazer.

The right wing was formed within three-quarters of a mile of the left of the American camp; and a corps of rangers, Indians, and provincials, was pushed on through secret paths, to show themselves in its rear, and excite alarm in that quarter.[1]

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[1] Letter of Burgoyne.

These movements were perceived by General Gates, who determined to attack their left, and, at the same time, to fall on their right flank. Poor's brigade, and some regiments from New Hampshire, were ordered to meet them in front; while Morgan with his rifle corps made a circuit unperceived, and seized a very advantageous height covered with wood on their right. As soon as it was supposed that Morgan had gained the ground he intended to occupy, the attack was made in front and on the left, in great force. At this critical moment Morgan poured in a deadly and incessant fire on the front and right flank.

Oct. 7.

While the British right wing was thus closely pressed in front, and on its flank, a distinct division of the American troops was ordered to intercept its retreat to camp, and to separate it from the residue of the army. Burgoyne perceived the danger of his situation, and ordered the light infantry under General Frazer, with part of the 24th regiment, to form a second line, in order to cover the light infantry of the right, and secure a retreat. While this movement was in progress, the left of the British right was forced from its ground, and the light infantry was ordered to its aid. In the attempt to execute this order, they were attacked by the rifle corps, with great effect; and Frazer was mortally wounded. Overpowered by numbers, and pressed on all sides by a superior weight of fire, Burgoyne, with great difficulty, and with the loss of his field pieces, and great part of his artillery corps, regained his camp. The Americans followed close in his rear; and assaulted his works throughout their whole extent. Towards the close of day, the intrenchments were forced on their right; and General Arnold, with a few men, actually entered their works; but his horse being killed under him, and himself wounded, the troops were forced out of them; and it being nearly dark, they desisted from the assault. The left of Arnold's division was still more successful. Jackson's regiment of Massachusetts, then led by Lieutenant Colonel Brooks, turned the right of the encampment, and stormed the works occupied by the German reserve. Lieutenant Colonel Brechman who commanded in them was killed, and the works were carried. The orders given by Burgoyne to recover them were not executed; and Brooks maintained the ground he had gained.

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[1] Remem.

Darkness put an end to the action; and the Americans lay all night with their arms in their hands, about half a mile from the British lines ready to renew the assault with the return of day. The advantage they had gained was decisive. They had taken several pieces of artillery, killed a great number of men, made upwards of two hundred prisoners, among whom were several officers of distinction, and had penetrated the lines in a part which exposed the whole to considerable danger.

Unwilling to risk the events of the next day on the same ground, Burgoyne changed his position in the course of the night, and drew his whole army into a strong camp on the river heights, extending his right up the river. This movement extricated him from the danger of being attacked the ensuing morning by an enemy already in possession of part of his works.

General Gates perceived the strength of this position, and was not disposed to hazard an assault. Aware of the critical situation of his adversary, he detached a party higher up the Hudson for the purpose of intercepting the British army on its retreat, while strong corps were posted on the other side of the river to guard its passage.

This movement compelled Burgoyne again to change his position, and to retire to Saratoga. About nine at night the retreat was commenced, and was effected with the loss of his hospital, containing about three hundred sick, and of several batteaux laden with provision and baggage. On reaching the ground to

Oct. 10. be occupied, he found a strong corps already intrenched on the opposite side of the river, prepared to dispute its passage.

From Saratoga, Burgoyne detached a company of artificers, under a strong escort, to repair the roads and bridges towards fort Edward. Scarcely had this detachment moved, when the Americans appeared in force on the heights south of Saratoga creek, and made dispositions which excited the apprehension of a design to cross it and attack his camp. The Europeans escort-ing the artificers were recalled, and a provincial corps, employed in the same service, being attacked by a small party, ran away and left the workmen to shift for themselves.

No hope of repairing the roads remaining, it became impossible to move the baggage and artillery.

The British army was now almost completely environed by a superior force. No means remained of extricating itself from difficulties and dangers which were continually increasing, but fording a river, on the opposite bank of which a formidable body of troops was already posted; and then escaping to fort George, through roads impassable by artillery or wagons, while its rear was closely pressed by a victorious enemy.[1]

A council of general officers called to deliberate on their situation, took the bold resolution to abandon every thing but their arms and such provisions as the soldiers could carry; and, by a forced march in the night up the river, to extricate themselves from the American army; and crossing at fort Edward, or at a ford above it, to press on to fort George.

Gates had foreseen this movement, and had prepared for it. In addition to placing strong guards at the fords of the Hudson, he had formed an intrenched camp on the high grounds between fort Edward and fort George. The scouts sent to examine the route returned with this information, and the plan was abandoned as impracticable.

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[1] Mr. Gordon, in his history of the war, states himself to have received from General Glover an anecdote, showing, that all these advantages were on the point of being exposed to imminent hazard. "On the morning of the eleventh, Gates called the general officers together, and informed them of his having received certain intelligence, which might be depended upon, that the main body of Burgoyne's army was marched off for fort Edward with what they could take; and that the rear guard only was left in the camp, who, after awhile, were to push off as fast as possible, leaving the heavy baggage behind. On this it was concluded to advance and attack the camp in half an hour. The officers repaired immediately to their respective commands. General Nixon's being the eldest brigade, crossed the Saratoga creek first. Unknown to the Americans, Burgoyne had a line formed behind a parcel of brush-wood, to support the park of artillery where the attack was to be made. General Glover was upon the point of following Nixon. Just as he entered the water, he saw a British soldier making across, whom he called and examined." This soldier was a deserter, and communicated the very important fact that the whole British army were in their encampment. Nixon was immediately stopped: and the intelligence conveyed to Gates, who countermanded his orders for the assault, and called back his troops, not without sustaining some loss from the British artillery.

Gordon is confirmed by General Wilkinson, who was adjutant general in the American army. The narrative of the general varies from that of Gordon only in minor circumstances.

Nothing could be more hopeless than the condition of the British army, or more desperate than that of their general, as described by himself. In his letter to Lord George Germain, secretary of state for American affairs, he says, "A series of hard toil, incessant effort, stubborn action, until disabled in the collateral branches of the army by the total defection of the Indians; the desertion, or timidity of the Canadians and provincials, some individuals excepted; disappointed in the last hope of any co-operation from other armies; the regular troops reduced by losses from the best parts, to three thousand five hundred fighting men, not two thousand of which were British; only three days provisions, upon short allowance, in store; invested by an army of sixteen thousand men; and no appearance of retreat remaining; I called into council all the generals, field officers, and captains commanding corps, and by their unanimous concurrence and advice, I was induced to open a treaty with Major General Gates."

A treaty was opened with a general proposition, stating the willingness of the British general to spare the further effusion of blood, provided a negotiation could be effected on honourable terms.

This proposition was answered by a demand that the whole army should ground their arms in their encampment, and surrender themselves prisoners of war. This demand was instantly rejected, with a declaration that if General Gates designed to insist on it, the negotiation must immediately break off, and hostilities recommence. On receiving this decided answer, Gates receded from the rigorous terms at first proposed; and a convention was signed, in which it was agreed that the British army, after marching out of their encampment with all the honours of war, should lay down their arms, and not serve against the United States till exchanged. They were not to be detained in captivity, but to be permitted to embark for England.

Oct. 17.

The situation of the armies considered,[1] these terms were highly honourable to the British general, and favourable to his nation. They were probably more advantageous than would have been granted by General Gates, had he entertained no apprehension from Sir Henry Clinton, who was, at length, making the promised diversion on the North River, up which he had penetrated as far as Æsopus.

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[1] The American army consisted of nine thousand and ninety-three continental troops. The number of the militia fluctuated; but amounted, at the signature of the convention, to four thousand one hundred and twenty-nine. The sick exceeded two thousand five hundred men.

The draughts made from Peekskill for both armies had left that post in a situation to require the aid of militia for its security. The requisitions of General Putnam were complied with; but the attack upon them being delayed, the militia, who were anxious to seed their farms, became impatient; many deserted; and General Putnam was induced to discharge the residue.

Governor Clinton immediately ordered out half the militia of New York, with assurances that they should be relieved in one month by the other half. This order was executed so slowly that the forts were carried before the militia were in the field.

Great pains had been taken, and much labour employed, to render this position, which is naturally strong, still more secure. The principal defences were forts Montgomery and Clinton. They had been constructed on the western bank of the Hudson, on very high ground, extremely difficult of access, and were separated from each other by a small creek which runs from the mountains into the river. These forts were too much elevated to be battered from the water, and the hills on which they stood were too steep to be ascended by troop landing at the foot of them. The mountains, which commence five or six miles below them, are so high and rugged, the defiles, through which the roads leading to them pass, so narrow, and so commanded by the heights on both sides, that the approaches to them are extremely difficult and dangerous.

To prevent ships from passing the forts, chevaux-de-frise had been sunk in the river, and a boom extended from bank to bank, which was covered with immense chains stretched at some distance in its front. These works were defended by the guns of the forts, and by a frigate and galleys stationed above them, capable of opposing with an equal fire in front any force which might attack them by water from below.

Fort Independence is four or five miles below forts Montgomery and Clinton, and on the opposite side of the river, on a high point of land; and fort Constitution is rather more than six miles above them, on an island near the eastern shore. Peekskill, the general head quarters of the officer commanding at the station, is just below fort Independence, and on the same side of the river. The garrisons had been reduced to about six hundred men; and the whole force under General Putnam did not much exceed two thousand. Yet this force, though far inferior to that which General Washington had ordered to be retained at the station, was, if properly applied, more than competent to the defence of the forts against any numbers which could be spared from New York. To insure success to the enterprise, it was necessary to draw the attention of Putnam from the real object, and to storm the works before the garrisons could be aided by his army. This Sir Henry Clinton accomplished.

Between three and four thousand men embarked at New York, and landed on the 5th of October at Verplank's Point, on the east side of the Hudson, a short distance below Peekskill, upon which General Putnam retired to the heights in his rear. On the evening of the same day, a part of these troops re-embarked, and the fleet moved up the river to Peekskill Neck, in order to mask King's ferry, which was below them. The next morning, at break of day, the troops destined for the enterprise, landed on the west side of Stony Point, and commenced their march through the mountains, into the rear of forts Clinton and Montgomery.[1] This disembarkation was observed; but the morning was so foggy that the numbers could not be distinguished; and a large fire which was afterwards perceived at the landing place, suggested the idea that the sole object of the party on shore was the burning of some store houses. In the mean time, the manœuvres of the vessels, and the appearance of a small detachment left at Verplank's Point, persuaded General Putnam that the meditated attack was on fort Independence.

His whole attention was directed to this object; and the real designs of the enemy were not suspected, until a heavy firing from the other side of the river announced the assault on forts Clinton and Montgomery. Five hundred men were instantly detached to reinforce the garrisons of those places; but, before this detachment could cross the river the forts were in possession of the British.

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[1] Letter of Sir Henry Clinton.

Having left a battalion at the pass of Thunderhill, to keep up a communication, Sir Henry Clinton had formed his army into two divisions one of which consisting of nine hundred men, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Campbell, made a circuit by the forest of Deane, in order to fall on the back of fort Montgomery; while the other, consisting of twelve hundred men, commanded by General Vaughan, and accompanied by Sir Henry Clinton in person, advanced slowly against fort Clinton.[1]

Both posts were assaulted about five in the afternoon. The works were defended with resolution, and were maintained until dark, when, the lines being too extensive to be completely manned, the assailants entered them in different places. The defence being no longer possible, some of the garrison were made prisoners, while their better knowledge of the country enabled others to escape. Governor Clinton passed the river in a boat, and General James Clinton, though wounded in the thigh by a bayonet, also made his escape. Lieutenant Colonels Livingston and Bruyn, and Majors Hamilton and Logan were among the prisoners. The loss sustained by the garrisons was about two hundred and fifty men. That of the assailants, was stated by Sir H. Clinton, at less than two hundred. Among the killed were Lieutenant Colonel Campbell, and two other field officers.

As the boom and chains drawn across the river could no longer be defended, the continental frigates and galleys lying above them were burnt, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy. Fort Independence and fort Constitution were evacuated the next day, and Putnam retreated to Fishkill. General Vaughan, after burning Continental village, where stores to a considerable amount had been deposited, proceeded, at the head of a strong detachment, up the river to Æsopus, which he also destroyed.[2]

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[1] Letter of Sir Henry Clinton.

[2] Intelligence of the success of Sir Henry Clinton on the North River was received by General Burgoyne, in the night after the convention at Saratoga had been agreed upon, but before the articles had been signed and executed. The British general had serious thoughts of breaking off the treaty.

General Putnam, whose army had been augmented by reinforcements of militia to six thousand men, detached General Parsons with two thousand, to repossess himself of Peekskill, and of the passes in the highlands; while, with the residue, he watched the progress of the enemy up the river. The want of heavy artillery prevented his annoying their ships in the Hudson.

On the capitulation of Burgoyne, near five thousand men had been detached by Gates to his aid. Before their arrival, General Vaughan had returned to New York, whence a reinforcement to General Howe was then about to sail.

Great as was the injury sustained by the United States from this enterprise, Great Britain derived from it no solid advantage. It was undertaken at too late a period to save Burgoyne; and though the passes in the highlands were acquired, they could not be retained. The British had reduced to ashes every village, and almost every house within their power; but this wanton and useless destruction served to irritate, without tending to subdue. A keenness was given to the resentment of the injured, which outlasted the contest between the two nations.

The army which surrendered at Saratoga exceeded five thousand men. On marching from Ticonderoga, it was estimated at nine thousand. In addition to this great military force, the British lost, and the Americans acquired, a fine train of artillery, seven thousand stand of excellent arms, clothing for seven thousand recruits, with tents, and other military stores, to a considerable amount.

The thanks of congress were voted to General Gates and his army; and a medal of gold, in commemoration of this great event, was ordered to be struck, and presented to him by the President, in the name of the United States. Colonel Wilkinson, the Adjutant General, whom he strongly recommended, was appointed Brigadier General by brevet.

In the opinion that the British would not immediately abandon the passes in the highlands, congress ordered Putnam to join General Washington with a reinforcement not exceeding two thousand five hundred men, and directed Gates to take command of the army on the Hudson, with unlimited powers to call for aids of militia from the New England States, as well as from New York and New Jersey.

A proposition to authorize the Commander-in-chief, after consulting with General Gates and Governor Clinton, to increase the detachment designed to strengthen his army, if he should then be of opinion that it might be done without endangering the objects to be accomplished by Gates, was seriously opposed. An attempt was made to amend this proposition so as to make the increase of the reinforcement to depend on the assent of Gates and Clinton; but this amendment was lost by a considerable majority, and the original resolution was carried. These proceedings were attended with no other consequences than to excite some degree of attention to the state of parties.

Soon after the capitulation of Burgoyne, Ticonderoga and Mount Independence were evacuated, and the garrison retired to Isle Aux Noix and St. Johns.

The effect produced by this event on the British cabinet and nation, was great and immediate. It seemed to remove the delusive hopes of conquest with which they had been flattered, and suddenly to display the mass of resistance which must yet be encountered. Previous to the reception of this disastrous intelligence, the employment of savages in the war had been the subject of severe animadversion. Parliament was assembled on the 20th of November; and, as usual, addresses were proposed in answer to the speech from the throne, entirely approving the conduct of the administration. In the House of Lords, the Earl of Chatham moved to amend the address by introducing a clause recommending to his Majesty, an immediate cessation of hostilities, and the commencement of a treaty of conciliation, "to restore peace and liberty to America, strength and happiness to England, security and permanent prosperity to both countries." In the course of the very animated observations made by this extraordinary man in support of his motion, he said,[1] "But, my lords, who is the man that, in addition to the disgraces and mischiefs of war, has dared to authorize and associate to our arms the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the savage? to call into civilized alliance the wild and inhuman inhabitant of the woods? to delegate to the merciless Indian the defence of disputed rights, and to wage the horrors of his barbarous war against our brethren? My Lords, these enormities cry aloud for redress and punishment. Unless thoroughly done away they will be a stain on the national character. It is not the least of our national misfortunes that the strength and character of our army are thus impaired. Familiarized to the horrid scenes of savage cruelty, it can no longer boast of the noble and generous principles which dignify a soldier. No longer sympathize with the dignity of the royal banner, nor feel the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war that makes ambition virtue. What makes ambition virtue? the sense of honour. But is this sense of honour consistent with the spirit of plunder, or the practice of murder? Can it flow from mercenary motives? or can it prompt to cruel deeds?" [1]

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[1] Life of Chatham.—Belsham.

The conduct of administration, however, received the full approbation of large majorities; but the triumph these victories in Parliament afforded them was of short duration. The disastrous issue of an expedition from which the most sanguine expectations had been formed, was soon known, and the mortification it produced was extreme. A reluctant confession of the calamity was made by the minister, and a desire to restore peace on any terms consistent with the integrity of the empire found its way into the cabinet.

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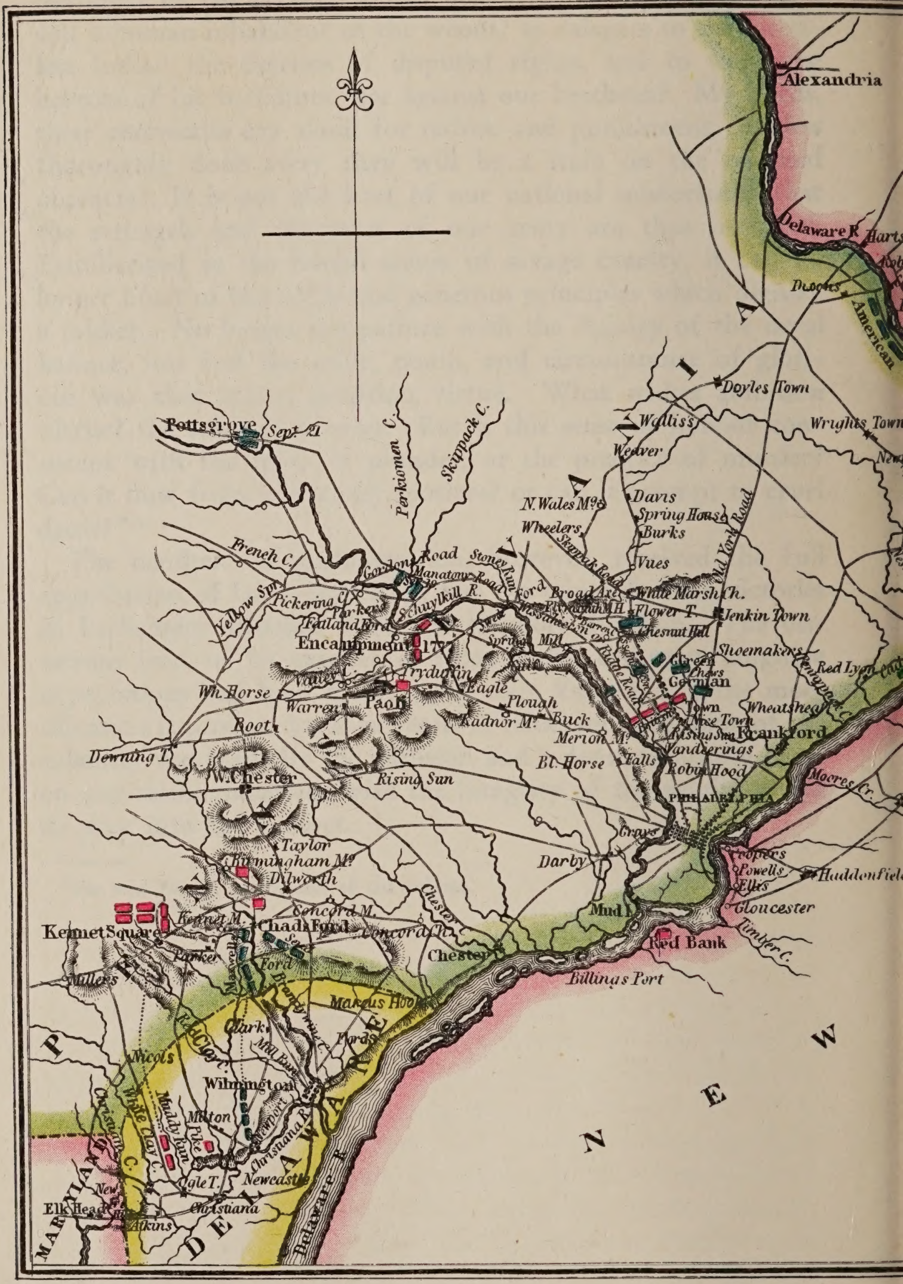
[1] See note No. X. at the end of the volume.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N. Wales Mg.
Wheelers
Skippack Road
Old York Road
White Marsh Ch.
Flower T.
Jenkin Town
Chesnut Hill
Shoemakers
Red Lyon
Green
Chews
German Town
Nice Town
Rising Sun
Wheatshead
Frankford
Vanderings
Robin Hood
PHILADELPHIA
Moores Cr.
Coopers
Powells
Ellis
Haddonfield
Gloucester
Timber C.
Red Bank
Billings Port
Mud I.
Darby
Grays
Falls
Bl. Horse
Merion M.
Buck
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Plough
Eagle
Trydufin
Paoli
Warren
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Maxwell
Ford
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Marcus Hook
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Red Clay C.
Nicols
White Clay C.
Muddy Run
Milton
Pike
Wilmington
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Christiana R.
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Skippack C.
French C.
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Stoney Run
Ford
Broad Axe
Plymouth M.H.
Barrens
Schuylkill R.
Pickering C.
Parkers
Fatland Ford
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Yellow Spr.
Valley C.
Spring
Mill
Ridge Road
PENNSYLVANIA
DELAWARE
MARYLAND
Delaware R.
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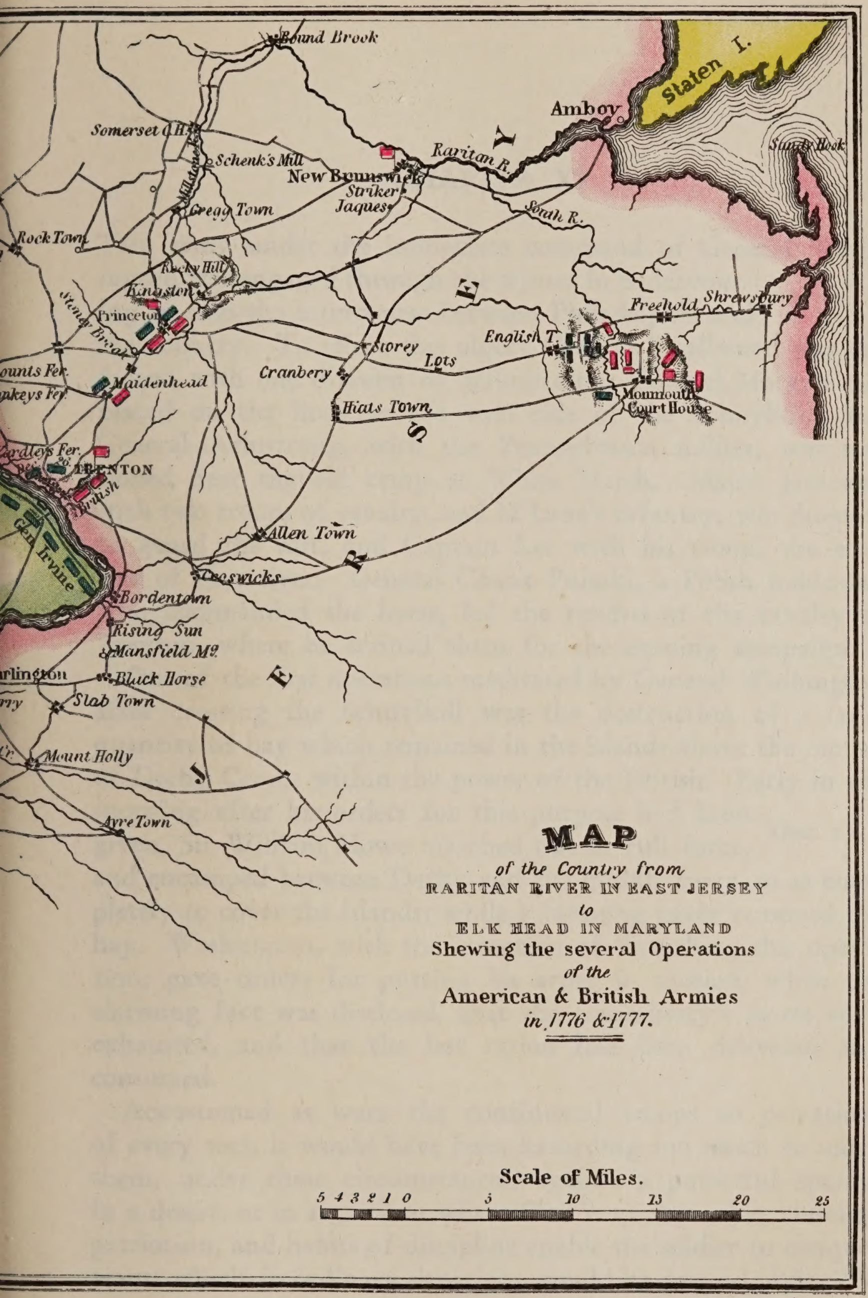
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Millstone
Gregg Town
South R.
Rock Town
Rocky Hill
Kingston
Princeton
Stony Brook
Freehold
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Yardleys Fer.
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Allen Town
Croswicks
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MAP

of the Country from
RARITAN RIVER IN EAST JERSEY
to
ELK HEAD IN MARYLAND
Shewing the several Operations
of the
American & British Armies
in 1776 & 1777.

Engraved by J. Yeager

CHAPTER XI

THE army under the immediate command of General Washington was engaged through the winter in endeavouring to stop the intercourse between Philadelphia and the country. 1777. To effect this object General Smallwood was detached with one division to Wilmington; Colonel Morgan was placed on the lines on the west side of the Schuylkill; and General Armstrong, with the Pennsylvania militia, was stationed near the old camp at White Marsh. Major Jameson, with two troops of cavalry, and M'Lane's infantry, was directed to guard the east, and Captain Lee with his troop, the west side of that river. General Count Pulaski, a Polish nobleman who commanded the horse, led the residue of the cavalry to Trenton, where he trained them for the ensuing campaign.

One of the first operations meditated by General Washington after crossing the Schuylkill was the destruction of a large quantity of hay which remained in the islands above the mouth of Derby Creek, within the power of the British. Early in the morning after his orders for this purpose had been given, Sir William Howe marched out in full force, Dec. 22. and encamped between Derby and the middle ferry, so as completely to cover the islands; while a foraging party removed the hay. Washington, with the intention of disturbing this operation, gave orders for putting his army in motion, when the alarming fact was disclosed, that the commissary's stores were exhausted, and that the last ration had been delivered and consumed.

Accustomed as were the continental troops to privations of every sort, it would have been hazarding too much to move them, under these circumstances, against a powerful enemy. In a desert, or in a garrison where food is unattainable, courage, patriotism, and habits of discipline enable the soldier to conquer wants which, in ordinary situations, would be deemed invincible.

But to perish in a country abounding with provisions, requires something more than fortitude; nor can soldiers readily submit, while in such a country, to the deprivation of food. It is not therefore surprising that, among a few of the troops, some indications of a mutiny appeared. It is much more astonishing that the great body of the army bore a circumstance so irritating, and to them so unaccountable, without a murmur.

On receiving intelligence of the fact, General Washington ordered the country to be scoured, and provisions, for supplying the pressing wants of the moment, to be seized wherever found. In the mean time, light parties were detached to harass the enemy about Derby, where Sir William Howe, with his accustomed circumspection, kept his army so compact, and his soldiers so within the lines, that an opportunity to annoy him was seldom afforded even to the vigilance of Morgan and Lee. After completing his forage, he returned, with inconsiderable loss, to Philadelphia.

That the American army, while the value still retained by paper bills placed ample funds in the hands of government, should be destitute of food, in the midst of a state so abounding with provisions as Pennsylvania, is one of those extraordinary facts which can not fail to excite attention.

Early in the war, the office of commissary general had been conferred on Colonel Trumbull, of Connecticut, a gentleman fitted by his talents, activity and zeal, for that important station. Yet, from the difficulty of arranging so complicated a department in its commencement, without the advantages of experience, complaints were repeatedly made of the insufficiency of supplies.

The subject was taken up by congress; but the remedy administered, as well from the time of its application, as from the ingredients of which it was composed, served only to increase the disease. The system was not completed until near midsummer; and then its arrangements were such that Colonel Trumbull refused to accept the office assigned to him; and new men were to be called into service at a time when the strongest necessity required the exertions of those who understood the plan of supplies for the campaign in all its modifications. In addition to the commissary of purchases, and a commissary general of issues, each to be appointed by congress, the new plan contemplated four deputies in each department, also to be appointed by that body, who were not accountable to, nor removable by the head of the department, but might be suspended, and accused before congress who should examine the charge, and either remove the accused from his office, or reinstate him in it.

This *imperium in imperio*, erected in direct opposition to the opinion of the Commander-in-chief, drove Colonel Trumbull from the army. Congress however persisted in the system; and the effects of deranging so important a department as that which feeds the troops, in the midst of a campaign, were not long in unfolding themselves. In every military division of the continent, loud complaints were made of the deficiency of supplies. The success of Gates appears to have been more endangered by this cause, than by the movement of Sir Henry Clinton up the Hudson. The army of General Washington was often greatly embarrassed, and his movements not unfrequently suspended, by the want of provisions. The present total failure of all supply was preceded, for a few days, by the issuing of meat unfit to be eaten. Representations on this subject were made to the Commander-in-chief, who, on the morning that Sir William Howe moved out to Derby, and before intelligence of that movement had been received, communicated them to congress.

That body had authorized the Commander-in-chief to seize provisions for the use of his army within seventy miles of head quarters; and either to pay for them in money, or in certificates, for the redemption of which the faith of the United States was pledged. The odium of this measure was increased by the failure of the government to provide funds to take up these certificates when presented.

At the same time, the provisions carried into Philadelphia were paid for in specie at a good price. The inhabitants of that part of Pennsylvania were not zealous in support of the war, and the difference between prompt payment in gold or silver, and a certificate, the value of which was often diminished by depreciation before its payments, was too great not to influence their wishes and their conduct. Such was the dexterity they employed that, notwithstanding the rigour of the laws, and the vigilance of the troops stationed on the lines, they often succeeded in concealing their provisions from those who were authorized to impress for the army, and in conveying them privately into Philadelphia.

General Washington exercised the powers confided to him with caution, but he did exercise them; and by doing so, acquired considerable supplies. Congress appeared as much dissatisfied with the lenity of the Commander-in-chief, as the people were with his rigour, in consequence of which the subject was taken into consideration, his forbearance disapproved, and instructions given for the rigorous exertions in future of the powers with which he was invested. In reply to the letter communicating these resolves, the general stated the conduct he had observed, insisted that provisions had been taken very extensively, and repeated his opinion, that such measures would be much more readily submitted to if executed by the civil authority.

In obedience however to the will of congress, he issued a proclamation, requiring the farmers within seventy miles of head quarters, to thrash out one half of their grain by the first of February, and the residue by the first of March, under the penalty of having the whole seized as straw.

The success of this experiment did not correspond with the wishes of congress. It was attended with the pernicious consequences which had been foreseen by the general, to avoid which he had considered this system as a dernier resort, of which he was to avail himself only in extreme cases. In answer to a letter on this subject from the board of war, he said, "I shall use every exertion that may be expedient and practicable for subsisting the army, and keeping it together; but I must observe, that this never can be done by coercive means. Supplies of provisions and clothing must be had in another way, or it can not exist. The small seizures that were made of the former some time ago, in consequence of the most pressing and urgent necessity—when the alternative was to do that or dissolve—excited the greatest alarm and uneasiness imaginable, even among some of our best and warmest friends. Such procedures may relieve for an instant, but eventually will prove of the most pernicious consequence. Besides spreading disaffection and jealousy among the people, they never fail, even in the most veteran armies, to raise in the soldiery a disposition to licentiousness, plunder, and robbery, which it has ever been found exceeding difficult to suppress; and which has not only proved ruinous to the inhabitants, but, in many instances, to the armies themselves." In a subsequent letter to congress, he added, "I regret the occasion which compelled us to the measure the other day, and shall consider it as among the greatest of our misfortunes to be under the necessity of practising it again. I am now obliged to keep several parties from the army thrashing grain, that our supplies may not fail; but this will not do."

About this time, a strong combination was forming against the Commander-in-chief, into which several members of congress, and a very few officers of the army are believed to have entered.

The splendour with which the capture of a British army had surrounded the military reputation of General Gates, acquired some advocates for the opinion that the arms of America would be more fortunate, should that gentleman be elevated to the supreme command. He could not be supposed hostile himself to the prevalence of this opinion, and some parts of his conduct would seem to warrant a belief that, if it did not originate with him, he was not among the last to adopt it. After the victory of the seventh of October had opened to him the prospect of subduing the army of Burgoyne, he not only omitted to communicate his success to General Washington, but carried on a correspondence with General Conway, in which that officer expressed great contempt for the Commander-in-chief. When the purport of this correspondence was disclosed to General Washington, Gates demanded the name of the informer in a letter far from being conciliatory in its terms, which was accompanied with the very extraordinary circumstance of being passed through congress.[1]

The state of Pennsylvania too, chagrined at the loss of its capital, and forgetful of its own backwardness in strengthening the army, which had twice fought superior numbers in its defence, furnished many discontented individuals. They imputed it to General Washington as a fault that, with forces inferior to his enemy in numbers, and in every equipment, he had not effected the same result which had been produced in the north, by a continental army, in itself, much stronger than its adversary, and so reinforced by militia as to treble his numbers. On the report that General Washington was moving into winter quarters, the legislature of that state addressed a remonstrance to congress on the subject, manifesting, in very intelligible terms, their dissatisfaction with the Commander-in-chief. About the same time, a new board of war was created, of which General Gates was appointed the President, and General Mifflin, who was supposed to be of the party unfriendly to Washington, was one of its members. General Conway, who was probably the only brigadier in the army that had joined this faction, was appointed inspector general, and was promoted, above senior brigadiers, to the rank of major general. These were evidences that, if the hold which the Commander-in-chief had taken of the affections and confidence of the army and of the nation could be loosened, the party in congress disposed to change their general, was far from being contemptible in point of numbers. But to loosen this hold was impossible. The indignation with which the idea of such a change was received even by the victorious troops who had conquered under Gates, forms the most conclusive proof of its strength. Even the northern army clung to Washington as the saviour of his country.

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[1] See note No. XI. at the end of the volume.

These machinations to diminish the well-earned reputation of the Commander-in-chief, could not escape his notice. They made, however, no undue impression on his steady mind, nor did they change one of his measures. His sensibilities seem to have been those of patriotism, of apprehension for his country, rather than of wounded pride. His desire to remain at the head of the army seemed to flow from the conviction that his retaining that station would be useful to his country, rather than from the gratification his high rank might furnish to ambition. When he unbosomed himself to his private friends, the feelings and sentiments he expressed were worthy of Washington. To Mr. Laurens, the president of congress, and his private friend, who, in an unofficial letter, had communicated an anonymous accusation made to him as president, containing heavy charges against the Commander-in-chief, he said, "I can not sufficiently express the obligation I feel towards you for your friendship and politeness upon an occasion in which I am deeply interested. I was not unapprized that a malignant faction had been for some time forming to my prejudice, which, conscious as I am of having ever done all in my power to answer the important purposes of the trusts reposed in me, could not but give me some pain on a personal account; but my chief concern arises from an apprehension of the dangerous consequences which intestine dissensions may produce to the common cause.

"As I have no other view than to promote the public good, and am unambitious of honours not founded in the approbation of my country, I would not desire, in the least degree, to suppress a free spirit of inquiry into any part of my conduct that even faction itself may deem reprehensible. The anonymous paper handed you exhibits many serious charges, and it is my wish that it may be submitted to congress. This I am the more inclined to, as the suppression or concealment may possibly involve you in embarrassment hereafter, since it is uncertain how many, or who, may be privy to the contents.

"My enemies take an ungenerous advantage of me. They know the delicacy of my situation, and that motives of policy deprive me of the defence I might otherwise make against their insidious attacks. They know I can not combat their insinuations, however injurious, without disclosing secrets it is of the utmost moment to conceal. But why should I expect to be free from censure, the unfailing lot of an elevated station? Merit and talents which I can not pretend to rival, have ever been subject to it. My heart tells me it has been my unremitted aim to do the best which circumstances would permit. Yet I may have been very often mistaken in my judgment of the means, and may in many instances deserve the imputation of error." [1]

Fortunately for America, these combinations only excited resentment against those who were believed to be engaged in them.

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[1] See note No. XII. at the end of the volume.

Soon after being informed of the unfavourable disposition of some members of congress towards him, and receiving the memorial of the legislature of Pennsylvania against his going into winter quarters, the general also discovered the failure already mentioned in the commissary department. On this occasion, he addressed congress in terms of energy and plainness which he had used on no former occasion. In his letter to that body he said, "Full as I was in my representation of the matters in the commissary's department yesterday, fresh and more powerful reasons oblige me to add that I am now convinced beyond a doubt that, unless some great and capital change suddenly takes place in that line, this army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things—to starve, dissolve, or disperse in order to obtain subsistence. Rest assured, sir, that this is not an exaggerated picture, and that I have abundant reason to suppose what I say.

"Saturday afternoon, receiving information that the enemy, in force, had left the city, and were advancing towards Derby with apparent design to forage, and draw subsistence from that part of the country, I ordered the troops to be in readiness, that I might give every opposition in my power; when, to my great mortification, I was not only informed, but convinced, that the men were unable to stir on account of a want of provisions; and that a dangerous mutiny, begun the night before and which with difficulty was suppressed by the spirited exertions of some officers, was still much to be apprehended from the want of this article.

"This brought forth the only commissary in the purchasing line in this camp, and with him this melancholy and alarming truth, that he had not a single hoof of any kind to slaughter, and not more than twenty-five barrels of flour! From hence, form an opinion of our situation, when I add that he could not tell when to expect any.

"All I could do under these circumstances, was to send out a few light parties to watch and harass the enemy, whilst other parties were instantly detached different ways to collect, if possible, as much provision as would satisfy the present pressing wants of the soldiers; but will this answer? No, sir. Three or four days of bad weather would prove our destruction. What then is to become of the army this winter? And if we are now as often without provisions as with them, what is to become of us in the spring, when our force will be collected, with the aid perhaps of militia, to take advantage of an early campaign before the enemy can be reinforced? These are considerations of great magnitude, meriting the closest attention, and will, when my own reputation is so intimately connected with, and to be affected by the event, justify my saying, that the present commissaries are by no means equal to the execution of the office, or that the disaffection of the people surpasses all belief. The misfortune, however, does, in my opinion, proceed from both causes; and, though I have been tender heretofore of giving any opinion, or of lodging complaints, as the change in that department took place contrary to my judgment, and the consequences thereof were predicted, yet, finding that the inactivity of the army, whether for want of provisions, clothes, or other essentials, is charged to my account, not only by the common vulgar, but by those in power; it is time to speak plain in exculpation of myself. With truth, then, I can declare that no man, in my opinion, ever had his measures more impeded than I have, by every department of the army. Since the month of July, we have had no assistance from the quartermaster general; and to want of assistance from this department, the commissary general charges great part of his deficiency. To this I am to add that, notwithstanding it is a standing order (often repeated) that the troops shall always have two days provision by them, that they may be ready at any sudden call; yet, scarcely any opportunity has ever offered of taking advantage of the enemy, that has not been either totally obstructed, or greatly impeded, on this account; and this, the great and crying evil is not all. Soap, vinegar, and other articles allowed by congress, we see none of, nor have we seen them, I believe, since the battle of Brandywine. The first, indeed, we have little occasion for; few men having more than one shirt, many, only the moiety of one, and some, none at all. In addition to which, as a proof of the little benefit from a clothier general, and at the same time, as a farther proof of the inability of an army under the circumstances of this to perform the common duties of soldiers, we have, by a field return this day made, besides a number of men confined to hospitals for want of shoes, and others in farmers' houses on the same account, no less than two thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight men, now in camp, unfit for duty, because they are bare-foot, and otherwise naked. By the same return, it appears that our whole strength in continental troops, including the eastern brigades, which have joined us since the surrender of General Burgoyne, exclusive of the Maryland troops sent to Wilmington, amounts to no more than eight thousand two hundred in camp fit for duty; notwithstanding which, and that since the fourth instant, our number fit for duty, from the hardships and exposures they have undergone, particularly from the want of blankets, have decreased near two thousand men, we find gentlemen, without knowing whether the army was really going into winter quarters or not, (for I am sure no resolution of mine would warrant the remonstrance,) reprobating the measure as much as if they thought the soldiers were made of stocks or stones, and equally insensible of frost and snow; and moreover, as if they conceived it easily practicable for an inferior army, under the disadvantages I have described ours to be, which are by no means exaggerated, to confine a superior one, in all respects well appointed and provided for a winter's campaign within the city of Philadelphia, and to cover from depredation and waste the states of Pennsylvania, Jersey, &c. But what makes this matter still more extraordinary in my eye is, that these very gentlemen, who were well apprised of the nakedness of the troops from ocular demonstration, who thought their own soldiers worse clad than others, and advised me, near a month ago, to postpone the execution of a plan I was about to adopt, in consequence of a resolve of Congress for seizing clothes, under strong assurances that an ample supply would be collected in ten days, agreeably to a decree of the state; (not one article of which by the by is yet come to hand,) should think a winter's campaign, and the covering of their states from the invasion of an enemy, so easy and practicable a business. I can assure those gentlemen, that it is a much easier and less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room, by a good fire-side, than to occupy a cold bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow, without clothes or blankets. However, although they seem to have little feeling for the naked and distressed soldiers, I feel superabundantly for them, and from my soul pity those miseries which it is not in my power either to relieve or to prevent."

The representations made in this letter were not exaggerated. The distresses of the army, however, so far as respected clothing, did not arise from the inattention of congress. Measures for the importation of clothes had been adopted early in the war, but had not produced the effect expected from them. Vigorous but ineffectual means had also been taken to obtain supplies from the interior. The unfortunate non-importation agreements which preceded the commencement of hostilities, had reduced the quantity of goods in the country below the ordinary amount, and the war had almost annihilated foreign commerce. The progress of manufactures did not equal the consumption; and such was the real scarcity, that exactions from individuals produced great distress, without relieving the want of the army. A warm blanket was a luxury in which not many participated, either in the camp or in the country.

In the northern states, where the sea coast was too extensive, and the ports too numerous to be completely guarded, and where the people were more inclined to maritime enterprise, supplies both of arms and clothes were attainable in a more considerable degree than in those farther south; but the large sums of money expended in that part of the union for the support of the army, had lessened the value of the currency there more rapidly than elsewhere, and a consequent high nominal price was demanded for imported articles. Congress deemed the terms on which some large contracts had been made by the clothier general in Massachusetts, so exorbitant, as to forbid their execution; and at the same time, addressed a letter to the state government, requesting that the goods should be seized for the use of the army, at prices to be fixed by the legislature, in pursuance of a resolution of the 22d of November.

These recommendations from congress, so far as they exhorted the states to supply the wants of the soldiers, were strongly supported by the general. In his letters to the several governors, he represented the very existence of the army, and the continuance of the contest, as depending on their exertions in this respect.

To recruit the army for the ensuing campaign became again an object of vital importance; and the Commander-in-chief again pressed its necessity on congress, and on the states. To obtain a respectable number of men by voluntary enlistment had, obviously, become impossible. Coercion could be employed only by the state governments; and it required all the influence of General Washington to induce the adoption of a measure so odious in itself, but so indispensable to the acquirement of means to meet the crisis of the war, which, in his judgment, had not yet passed away. He enclosed to each state a return of its troops on continental establishment, thereby exhibiting to each its own deficiency. To those who had not resorted to coercive means, he stated the success with which they had been used by others; and he urged all, by every motive which could operate on the human mind, to employ those means early enough to enable him to anticipate the enemy in taking the field.

To the causes which had long threatened the destruction of the army, the depreciation of paper money was now to be added. It had become so considerable that the pay of an officer would not procure even those absolute necessaries which might protect his person from the extremes of heat and cold. The few who possessed small patrimonial estates found them melting away; and others were unable to appear as gentlemen. Such circumstances could not fail to excite disgust with the service, and a disposition to leave it. Among those who offered their commissions to the Commander-in-chief, were many who, possessing a large portion of military pride, and therefore feeling with peculiar sensibility the degradation connected with poverty and rags, afforded the fairest hopes of becoming the ornaments of the army. This general indifference about holding a commission; this general opinion that an obligation was conferred, not received by continuing in the service, could not fail to be unfavourable, not only to that spirit of emulation which stimulates to bolder deeds than are required, but to a complete execution of orders, and to a rigid observance of duty.

An officer whose pride was in any degree wounded, whose caprice was not indulged, who apprehended censure for a fault which his carelessness about remaining in the army had probably seduced him to commit, was ready to throw up a commission which, instead of being valuable, was a burden almost too heavy to be borne.

With extreme anxiety the Commander-in-chief watched the progress of a temper which, though just commencing, would increase, he feared, with the cause that produced it. He was, therefore, early and earnest in pressing the consideration of this important subject on the attention of congress.

The weak and broken condition of the continental regiments, the strong remonstrances of the General, the numerous complaints received from every quarter, determined congress to depute a committee to reside in camp during the winter, for the purpose of investigating the state of the army, and reporting such reforms as the public good might require.

This committee repaired to head quarters in the month of January. The Commander-in-chief laid before them a general statement, taking a comprehensive view of the condition of the army, and detailing the remedies necessary for the correction of existing abuses, as well as those regulations which he deemed essential to its future prosperity.

1778.

This paper, exhibiting the actual state of the army, discloses defects of real magnitude in the existing arrangements. In perusing it, the reader is struck with the numerous difficulties, in addition to those resulting from inferiority of numbers, with which the American general was under the necessity of contending. The memorial is too long to be inserted, but there are parts which ought not to be entirely overlooked. The neglect of the very serious representation it contained respecting a future permanent provision for the officers, threatened, at an after period, to be productive of such pernicious effects, that their insertion in this place will not, it is presumed, be unacceptable.

He recommended as the basis of every salutary reform, a comfortable provision for the officers, which should render their commissions valuable; to effect which the future, as well as the present, ought to be contemplated.

"A long and continual sacrifice of individual interest for the general good, ought not," he said, "to be expected or required.

The nature of man must be changed, before institutions built on the presumptive truth of such a principle can succeed.

"This position," he added, "is supported by the conduct of the officers of the American army, as well as by that of all other men. At the commencement of the dispute, in the first effusions of zeal, when it was believed the service would be temporary, they entered into it without regard to pecuniary considerations. But finding its duration much longer than had been at first expected, and that, instead of deriving advantage from the hardships and dangers to which they are exposed, they were, on the contrary, losers by their patriotism, and fell far short of even a competency for their wants, they have gradually abated in their ardour; and, with many, an entire disinclination to the service, under present circumstances, has taken place. To this, in an eminent degree, must be ascribed the frequent resignations daily happening, and the more frequent importunities for permission to resign, from some officers of the greatest merit.

"To this also may be ascribed the apathy, inattention, and neglect of duty, which pervade all ranks; and which will necessarily continue and increase, while an officer, instead of gaining any thing, is impoverished by his commission, and conceives he is conferring, not receiving a favour, in holding it. There can be no sufficient tie on men possessing such sentiments. Nor can any method be adopted to compel those to a punctual discharge of duty, who are indifferent about their continuance in the service, and are often seeking a pretext to disengage themselves from it. Punishment, in this case, would be unavailing. But when an officer's commission is made valuable to him, and he fears to lose it, you may exact obedience from him.

"It is not indeed consistent with reason or justice that one set of men should make a sacrifice of property, domestic ease, and happiness; encounter the rigours of the field, the perils and vicissitudes of war, without some adequate compensation, to obtain those blessings which every citizen will enjoy in common with them. It must also be a comfortless reflection to any man, that, after he may have contributed to secure the rights of his country, at the risk of his life, and the ruin of his fortune, there will be no provision made to prevent himself and his family, from sinking into indigence and wretchedness."

With these and other arguments, General Washington recommended in addition to present compensation, a half pay and pensionary establishment for the army.

"I urge my sentiments," said he, "with the greater freedom, because I can not, and shall not, receive the smallest benefit from the establishment; and can have no other inducement for proposing it than a full conviction of its utility and propriety."

The wants and distresses of the army, when actually seen by the committee of congress, made a much deeper impression than could have been received from any statement whatever. They endeavoured to communicate to congress the sentiments felt by themselves, and to correct the errors which had been committed. But a numerous body, if it deliberate at all, proceeds slowly in the conduct of executive business; and will seldom afford a prompt corrective to existing mischiefs, especially to those growing out of its own measures.

Much of the sufferings of the army was attributed to mismanagement in the quartermaster's department, which, notwithstanding the repeated remonstrances of the Commander-in-chief, had long remained without a head. This subject was taken up early by the committee, and proper representations made respecting it. But congress still remained under the influence of those opinions which had already produced such mischievous effects, and were still disposed to retain the subordinate officers of the department in a state of immediate dependence on their own body. In this temper, they proposed a plan which, not being approved in camp, was never carried into execution.

While congress was deliberating on the reforms proposed, the distresses of the army approached their acme, and its dissolution was threatened. Early in February, the commissaries gave notice that the country, to a great distance, was actually exhausted; and that it would be impracticable to obtain supplies for the army longer than to the end of that month. Already the threatened scarcity began to be felt, and the rations issued were often bad in quality, and insufficient in quantity. General Washington found it necessary again to interpose his personal exertions to procure provisions from a distance.

In the apprehension that the resources of the commissary department would fail before the distant supplies he had taken measures to obtain could reach him, and that the enemy designed to make another incursion into the country around Philadelphia, for the purpose of gleaning what yet remained in possession of the inhabitants, he detached General Wayne, with orders to seize every article proper for the use of an army within fifteen miles of the Delaware, and to destroy the forage on the islands between Philadelphia and Chester.

To defeat the object of this foraging party, the inhabitants concealed their provisions and teams, and gave to the country every appearance of having been entirely pillaged. Before any sufficient aid could be obtained by these means, the bread, as well as the meat, was exhausted, and famine prevailed in camp.

In an emergency so pressing, the Commander-in-chief used every effort to feed his hungry army. Parties were sent out to glean the country; officers of influence were deputed to Jersey, Delaware and Maryland; and circular letters were addressed to the governors of states by the committee of congress in camp and by the Commander-in-chief, describing the wants of the army, and urging the greatest exertions for its immediate relief.

Fortunately for America, there were features in the character of Washington which, notwithstanding the discordant materials of which his army was composed, attached his officers and soldiers so strongly to his person, that no distress could weaken their affection, nor impair the respect and veneration in which they held him. To this sentiment is to be attributed, in a great measure, the preservation of a respectable military force, under circumstances but too well calculated for its dissolution.

Through this severe experiment on their fortitude, the native Americans persevered steadily in the performance of their duty; but the conduct of the Europeans, who constituted a large part of the army, was, to a considerable extent, less laudable; and at no period of the war was desertion so frequent as during this winter. Aided by the disaffected, deserters eluded the vigilance of the parties who watched the roads, and great numbers escaped into Philadelphia with their arms.

In a few days, the army was rescued from the famine with which it had been threatened, and considerable supplies of provisions were laid up in camp. It was perceived that the difficulties which had produced such melancholy effects, were created more by the want of due exertion in the commissary department, and by the efforts of the people to save their stock for a better market, than by any real deficiency of food in the country.

This severe demonstration seems to have convinced congress that their favourite system was radically vicious, and the subject was taken up with the serious intention of remodeling the commissary department on principles recommended by experience. But such were the delays inherent in the organization of that body, that the new system was not adopted until late in April.

At no period of the war had the situation of the American army been more perilous than at Valley Forge. Even when the troops were not entirely destitute of food, their stock of provisions was so scanty that a quantity sufficient for one week was seldom in store. Consequently, had General Howe moved out in force, the American army could not have remained in camp; and their want of clothes disabled them from keeping the field in the winter. The returns of the first of February exhibit the astonishing number of three thousand nine hundred and eighty-nine men in camp, unfit for duty for want of clothes. Scarcely one man of these had a pair of shoes. Even among those returned capable of doing duty, many were so badly clad, that exposure to the cold of the season must have destroyed them. Although the total of the army exceeded seventeen thousand men, the present effective rank and file amounted to only five thousand and twelve.

While the sufferings of the soldiers filled the hospitals, a dreadful mortality continued to prevail in those miserable receptacles of the sick. A violent putrid fever swept off much greater numbers than all the diseases of the camp.

If then during the deep snow which covered the earth for a great part of the winter, the British general had taken the field, his own army would indeed have suffered greatly, but the American loss is not to be calculated.

Happily, the real condition of Washington was not well understood by Sir William Howe; and the characteristic attention of that officer to the lives and comfort of his troops, saved the American army. Fortunately, he confined his operations to those small excursions that were calculated to enlarge the comforts of his own soldiers, who, notwithstanding the favourable dispositions of the neighbouring country, were much distressed for fuel, and often in great want of forage and fresh provisions. The vigilance of the parties on the lines, especially on the south side of the Schuylkill, intercepted a large portion of the supplies intended for the Philadelphia market; and corporal punishment was frequently inflicted on those who were detected in attempting this infraction of the laws. As Captain Lee was particularly active, a plan was formed, late in January, to surprise and capture him in his quarters. An extensive circuit was made by a large body of cavalry, who seized four of his patroles without communicating an alarm. About break of day the British horse appeared; upon which Captain Lee placed his troopers that were in the house, at the doors and windows, who behaved so gallantly as to repulse the assailants without losing a horse or man. Only Lieutenant Lindsay and one private were wounded. The whole number in the house did not exceed ten.[1] That of the assailants was said to amount to two hundred. They lost a sergeant and three men with several horses, killed; and an officer and three men wounded.

The result of this skirmish gave great pleasure to the Commander-in-chief, who had formed a high opinion of Lee's talents as a partisan. He mentioned the affair in his orders with strong marks of approbation; and, in a private letter to the captain, testified the satisfaction he felt. For his merit through the preceding campaign, congress promoted him to the rank of major, and gave him an independent partisan corps to consist of three troops of horse.

While the deficiency of the public resources, arising from the alarming depreciation of the bills of credit, manifested itself in all the military departments, a plan was matured in congress, and in the board of war, without consulting the Commander-in-chief, for a second irruption into Canada. It was proposed to place the Marquis de Lafayette at the head of this expedition, and to employ Generals Conway and Starke, as the second and third in command.

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[1] Major Jameson was accidentally present, and engaged in this skirmish.

This young nobleman, possessing an excellent heart, and all the military enthusiasm of his country, had left France early in 1777, in opposition to the will of his sovereign, to engage in the service of the United States. His high rank, and supposed influence at the court of Versailles, secured him the unlimited respect of his countrymen in America; and, added to his frankness of manners and zeal in their cause, recommended him strongly to congress. While the claims of others of the same country to rank were too exorbitant to be gratified, he demanded no station in the army; would consent to receive no compensation, and offered to serve as a volunteer. He had stipulated with Mr. Deane for the rank of major general without emolument; and, on his arrival in America, that rank was conferred on him, but without any immediate command. In that capacity, he sought for danger, and was wounded at the battle of Brandywine. He attached himself with the ardour of youth to the Commander-in-chief, who smoothed the way to his receiving a command in the army equal to his rank.

The first intimation to General Washington that the expedition was contemplated, was given in a letter from the president of the board of war of the 24th of January, inclosing one of the same date to the Marquis, requiring the attendance of that nobleman on congress to receive his instructions. The Commander-in-chief was requested to furnish Colonel Hazen's regiment, chiefly composed of Canadians, for the expedition; and in the same letter, his advice and opinion were asked respecting it. The northern states were to furnish the necessary troops.

Without noticing the manner in which this business had been conducted, and the marked want of confidence it betrayed, General Washington ordered Hazen's regiment to march towards Albany; and the Marquis proceeded immediately to the seat of congress. At his request, he was to be considered as an officer detached from the army of Washington, to remain under his orders, and Major General the Baron de Kalb was added to the expedition; after which the Marquis repaired in person to Albany to take charge of the troops who were to assemble at that place in order to cross the lakes on the ice, and attack Montreal.

On arriving at Albany, he found no preparations made for the expedition. Nothing which had been promised being in readiness, he abandoned the enterprise as impracticable. Some time afterward, congress also determined to relinquish it; and General Washington was authorized to recall both the Marquis de Lafayette, and the Baron de Kalb.

While the army lay at Valley Forge, the Baron Steuben arrived in camp. This gentleman was a Prussian officer, who came to the United States with ample recommendations. He was said to have served many years in the armies of the great Frederick; to have been one of the aids de camp of that consummate commander; and to have held the rank of lieutenant general. He was, unquestionably, versed in the system of field exercise which the king of Prussia had introduced, and was well qualified to teach it to raw troops. He claimed no rank, and offered to render his services as a volunteer. After holding a conference with congress, he proceeded to Valley Forge.

Although the office of inspector general had been bestowed on Conway, he had never entered on its duties; and his promotion to the rank of major general had given much umbrage to the brigadiers, who had been his seniors. That circumstance, in addition to the knowledge of his being in a faction hostile to the Commander-in-chief, rendered his situation in the army so uncomfortable, that he withdrew to York, in Pennsylvania, which was then the seat of congress. When the expedition to Canada was abandoned, he was not directed, with Lafayette and de Kalb, to rejoin the army. Entertaining no hope of being permitted to exercise the functions of his new office, he resigned his commission about the last of April, and, some time afterwards, returned to France.[1] On his resignation, the Baron

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[1] General Conway, after his resignation, frequently indulged in expressions of extreme hostility to the Commander-in-chief. These indiscretions were offensive to the gentlemen of the army. In consequence of them, he was engaged in an altercation with General Cadwallader, which produced a duel, in which Conway received a wound, supposed for some time to be mortal. While his recovery was despaired of, he addressed the following letter to General Washington.

Philadelphia, July 23d, 1778.

Sir,—I find myself just able to hold the pen during a few minutes, and take

Steuben, who had, as a volunteer, performed the duties of inspector general, much to the satisfaction of the Commander-in-chief, and of the army, was, on the recommendation of General Washington, appointed to that office with the rank of major general, without exciting the slightest murmur.

This gentleman was of real service to the American troops. He established one uniform system of field exercise; and, by his skill and persevering industry, effected important improvements through all ranks of the army during its continuance at Valley Forge.

1777.

While it was encamped at that place, several matters of great interest engaged the attention of congress. Among them, was the stipulation in the convention of Saratoga for the return of the British army to England. Boston was named as the place of embarkation. At the time of the capitulation, the difficulty of making that port early in the winter was unknown to General Burgoyne. Consequently, as some time must elapse before a sufficient number of vessels for the transportation of his army could be collected, its embarkation might be delayed until the ensuing spring.

On receiving this unwelcome intelligence, he applied to General Washington to change the port of embarkation, and to substitute Newport, in Rhode Island, or some place on the Sound, for Boston. If any considerations not foreseen should make this proposal objectionable, he then solicited this indulgence for himself and his suite. This request was communicated to congress, in terms favourable to that part of the application which respected General Burgoyne and his suite; but the objections to any change in the convention which might expedite the transportation of the army, were too weighty to be disregarded; and the general pressed them earnestly on congress. This precaution was unnecessary. The facility with which the convention might be violated by the British, and the

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this opportunity of expressing my sincere grief for having done, written, or said any thing disagreeable to your excellency. My career will soon be over, therefore, justice and truth prompt me to declare my last sentiments. You are, in my eyes, the great and good man. May you long enjoy the love, veneration, and esteem of these states, whose liberties you have asserted by your virtues.

I am with the greatest respect, sir,
Your excellency's most obedient humble servant,
PHS. CONWAY.

captured army be united to that under General Howe, seems to have suggested itself to the American government, as soon as the first rejoicings were over; and such was its then existing temper, that the faith and honour of British officers were believed to be no securities against their appearing again in the field. Under this impression, a resolution had passed early in November, directing General Heath to transmit to the board of war a descriptive list of all persons comprehended in the convention, "in order that, if any officer, soldier, or other person of the said army should hereafter be found in arms against these states in North America, during the present contest, he might be convicted of the offence, and suffer the punishment in such case inflicted by the law of nations."

No other notice was taken of the application made by General Burgoyne to congress through the Commander-in-chief, than to pass a resolution "that General Washington be directed to inform General Burgoyne that congress will not receive, nor consider, any proposition for indulgence, nor for altering the terms of the convention of Saratoga, unless immediately directed to their own body."

Contrary to expectation, a fleet of transports for the reception of the troops reached Rhode Island, on its way to Boston, in the month of December. But, before its arrival, the preconceived suspicions of congress had ripened into conviction: several circumstances combined to produce this result. General Burgoyne, dissatisfied with the accommodations prepared for his officers in Boston, had, after a fruitless correspondence with General Heath, addressed a letter to General Gates, in which he complained of the inconvenient quarters assigned his officers, as a breach of the articles of the convention. This complaint was considered by congress as being made for the purpose of letting in the principle, that the breach of one article of a treaty discharges the injured party from its obligations.

This suspicion was strengthened by the indiscreet hesitation of General Burgoyne to permit the resolution requiring a descriptive list of his troops to be executed. His subsequent relinquishment of the objection did not remove the impression it had made.

It was also alleged, that the number of transports was not sufficient to convey the troops to Europe; nor was it believed possible that Sir William Howe could have laid in, so expeditiously, a sufficient stock of provisions for the voyage.

These objections to the embarkation of Burgoyne's troops were strengthened by some trivial infractions of the convention, which, it was contended, gave congress a strict right to detain them. It was stipulated that "the arms" should be delivered up; and it appeared that several cartouch boxes and other military accoutrements, supposed to be comprehended in the technical term *arms*, had been detained. This was deemed an infraction of the letter of the compact, which, on rigid principle, justified the measures afterwards adopted by congress.

The whole subject was referred to a committee who reported all the circumstances of the case, whereupon congress came to several resolutions, enumerating the facts already mentioned, the last of which was in these words: "Resolved, therefore, that the embarkation of Lieutenant General Burgoyne, and the troops under his command, be suspended, until a distinct and explicit ratification of the convention of Saratoga shall be properly notified by the court of Great Britain to congress." 1778. Jan. 8.

These resolutions, together with the report on which they were founded, were transmitted to the several states, and to General Washington. Two copies of them were sent to General Heath, with directions to deliver one of them to General Burgoyne, and with farther directions, "to order the vessels which may have arrived, or which shall arrive, for the transportation of the army under Lieutenant General Burgoyne, to quit without delay, the port of Boston."

On receiving these resolutions, General Burgoyne addressed a letter to congress, containing papers, on which he founded a defence of his conduct, and insisted on the embarkation of his army, as stipulated in the convention; but the committee, to whom these papers were referred, reported their opinion, after the most attentive consideration of them, to be, "that nothing therein contained was sufficient to induce congress to recede from their resolves of the 8th of January last, respecting the convention of Saratoga. This application was accompanied by another letter from General Burgoyne, to be delivered if the army should still be detained, in which, in consideration of the state of his health, he solicited permission to return to England. This request was readily granted.

The impression made on the British nation by the capitulation of Burgoyne, notwithstanding the persevering temper of the king, at length made its way into the cabinet, and produced resolutions in favour of pacific measures.

After the rejection of repeated motions made by the opposition members tending to the abandonment of the American war, Lord North gave notice, in the House of Commons, that he had digested a plan of reconciliation which he designed shortly to lay before the house.

In conformity with this notice, he moved for leave to bring in, "first, A bill for removing all doubts and apprehensions concerning taxation by the Parliament of Great Britain in any of the colonies and plantations of North America.

"Second. A bill to enable his Majesty to appoint commissioners with sufficient powers to treat, consult, and agree upon the means of quieting the disorders now subsisting in certain of the colonies of North America."

The first contained a declaration that Parliament will impose no tax or duty whatever payable within any of the colonies of North America, except only such duties as it may be expedient to impose for the purposes of commerce, the net produce of which should always be paid and applied to and for the use of the colonies in which the same shall be respectively levied, in like manner as other duties collected under the authority of their respective legislatures are ordinarily paid and applied.

The second authorized the appointment of commissioners by the crown, with power to treat either with the existing governments, or with individuals, in America; provided that no stipulations which might be entered into should have any effect until approved in Parliament, other than is afterward mentioned.

It is then enacted, that the commissioners may have power "to proclaim a cessation of hostilities in any of the colonies, to suspend the operation of non-intercourse law; and farther, to suspend, during the continuance of the act, so much of all or any of the acts of Parliament which have passed since the 10th day of February, 1763, as relates to the colonies.

"To grant pardon to any number or description of persons, and to appoint a governor in any colony in which his majesty had heretofore exercised the power of making such appointments."

These bills passed both houses of Parliament with inconsiderable opposition.

Intelligence of the treaty between the United States and France having been received by the minister about the time of their being introduced, copies of them, before they had gone through the requisite forms, were hurried to America, to be laid before congress and the public, in the hope and expectation that they might counteract the effects which it was feared the treaty with France would produce.

General Washington received early information of their arrival, and entertained serious fears of their operation. He was apprehensive that the publication of a proposition for the restoration of peace on the terms originally required by America, would greatly increase the numbers of the disaffected; and immediately forwarded the bills to congress in a letter suggesting the policy of preventing their pernicious influence on the public mind by all possible means, and especially through the medium of the press.

This letter was referred to a committee, consisting of Messrs. Morris, Drayton, and Dana, by whom a report was made, investigating the bills with great acuteness as well as asperity. This report, and the resolutions upon it, were ordered to be published. Other resolutions were passed the succeeding day, recommending it to the states to pardon under such limitations as they might think proper to make, such of their misguided fellow-citizens as had levied war against the United States.

This resolution was accompanied by an order directing it to be printed in English and in German, and requesting General Washington to take such measures as he should deem most effectual for circulating the copies among the American recruits in the enemy's army.[1]

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[1] This request afforded the Commander-in-chief a fair retort on Major General Tryon. That officer had addressed a letter to him enclosing the bills brought into Parliament, and containing, to use the language of General Washington himself, "the more extraordinary and impertinent request" that their contents should be communicated through him to the army. General Washington now acknowledged

During these transactions, the frigate *La Sensible* arrived with the important intelligence that treaties of alliance and of commerce, had been formed between the United States of America and France. The treaties themselves were brought by Mr. Simeon Deane, the brother of the American Minister in Paris.

This event had long been anxiously expected, and the delay attending it had been such as to excite serious apprehension that it would never take place.

France was still extremely sore under the wounds inflicted during the war which terminated in 1763. It was impossible to reflect on a treaty which had wrested from her so fair a part of North America, without feeling resentments which would seek the first occasion of gratification.

The growing discontents between Great Britain and her colonies were, consequently, viewed at a distance with secret satisfaction; but rather as a circumstance which might have some tendency to weaken and embarrass a rival, and which was to be encouraged from motives of general policy, than as one from which any definite advantage was to be derived. France appears, at that time, to have required, and wished for, repose. The great exertions of the preceding disastrous war had so deranged her finances, that the wish to preserve peace seems to have predominated in her cabinet. The young monarch, who had just ascended the throne, possessed a pacific, unambitious temper, and the councils of the nation were governed by men alike indisposed to disturb the general tranquillity. The advice they gave the monarch was, to aid and encourage the colonies secretly, in order to prevent a reconciliation with the mother country, and to prepare privately for hostilities, by improving his finances, and strengthening his marine; but to avoid every thing which might give occasion for open war. The system which for a time regulated the cabinet of Versailles, conformed to this advice. While the utmost attention was paid to the Minister of Britain, and every measure to satisfy him was openly taken, intimation was privately given to those of the United States, that these measures were necessary for the

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the receipt of this letter, and, in return, enclosed to Governor Tryon copies of the resolution just mentioned, with a request that he would be instrumental in making them known to the persons on whom they were to operate.

present, but they might be assured of the good will of the French government.

During the public demonstration of dispositions favourable to England, means were taken to furnish aids of ammunition and arms, and to facilitate the negotiation of loans to the United States; and the owners of American privateers, though forbidden to sell their prizes, or to procure their condemnation, found means to dispose of them privately.

Meanwhile, another party was formed in the cabinet, to whose political system subsequent events gave the ascendency. Its avowed object was to seize the present moment to revenge past injuries, humble the haughty rival of France, and dismember her empire.

Matters remained in a fluctuating state until December, 1777. Privately encouraged, but discountenanced publicly, the prospects of the American Ministers varied according to the complexion of American affairs.

Intelligence of the convention of Saratoga reached France early in December, 1777. The American deputies took that opportunity to press the treaty which had been under consideration for the preceding twelve months; and to urge the importance, at this juncture, when Britain would, most probably, make proposals for an accommodation,[1] of communicating to congress, precisely, what was to be expected from France and Spain.

They were informed by M. Girard, one of the secretaries of the king's council of state, that it was determined to acknowledge the independence of the United States, and to make a treaty with them. That his Most Christian Majesty was resolved not only to acknowledge, but to support their independence. That in doing this, he might probably soon be engaged in a war; yet he should not expect any compensation from the United States on that account; nor was it pretended that he acted wholly for their sakes; since, besides his real good will to them, it was manifestly the interest of France that the power of England should be diminished by the separation of her colonies. The only condition he should require would be that the United States, in no peace to be made, should give up their independence, and return to their obedience to the British government.

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[1] Congress, in their first instructions to their commissioners, directed them to press the immediate declaration of France in favour of the United States, by suggesting that a reunion with Great Britain might be the consequence of delay.—*Secret Journal of Congress,* v. ii, p. 30.

On determining to take this decisive course, the cabinet of Versailles had despatched a courier to his Catholic majesty with information of the line of conduct about to be pursued by France. On his return, the negotiation was taken up in earnest, and a treaty of friendship and commerce was soon concluded. This was accompanied by a treaty of alliance eventual and defensive between the two nations, in which it was declared, that if war should break out between France and England during the existence of that with the United States, it should be made a common cause; and that neither of the contracting parties should conclude either truce or peace with Great Britain without the formal consent of the other, first obtained; and they mutually engaged "not to lay down their arms until the independence of the United States shall have been formally, or tacitly assured by the treaty, or treaties that shall terminate the war."

It was the wish of the ministers of the United States to engage France immediately in the war; and to make the alliance, not eventual, but positive. This proposition however was rejected.

In a few weeks after the conclusion of these negotiations, the Marquis de Noailles announced officially to the court of London, the treaty of friendship and commerce France had formed with the United States. The British government, considering this notification as a declaration of war, published a memorial for the purpose of justifying to all Europe the hostilities it had determined to commence.

Soon after their commencement, the Count de Vergennes received private intelligence that it was contemplated in the cabinet of London to offer to the United States an acknowledgment of their independence as the condition of a separate peace. He immediately communicated this intelligence to the American ministers, requesting them to lose no time in stating to congress that, though war was not declared in form, it had commenced in fact; and that he considered the obligations of the treaty of alliance as in full force; consequently that neither party was now at liberty to make a separate peace. Instructions of a similar import were given to the minister of France in the United States.

The despatches containing these treaties were received by the president on Saturday the second of May, after congress had adjourned. That body was immediately convened, the despatches were opened, and their joyful contents communicated.

In the exultation of the moment, the treaty of alliance, as well as that of commerce and friendship was published; a circumstance which, not without reason, gave umbrage to the cabinet of Versailles; because that treaty, being only eventual, ought not to have been communicated to the public but by mutual consent.

From this event, which was the source of universal exultation to the friends of the revolution, the attention must be directed to one which was productive of very different sensations.

Among the various improvements which struggling humanity has gradually engrafted on the belligerent code, none have contributed more to diminish the calamities of war, than those which meliorate the condition of prisoners. No obligations will be more respected by the generous and the brave; nor are there any, the violation of which could wound the national character more deeply, or expose it to more lasting or better merited reproach.

In wars between nations nearly equal in power, and possessing rights acknowledged to be equal, a departure from modern usage in this respect is almost unknown; and the voice of the civilized world would be raised against the potentate who could adopt a system calculated to re-establish the rigours and misery of exploded barbarism. But in contests between different parts of the same empire, those practices which mitigate the horrors of war yield, too frequently, to the calculations of a blind and erring resentment. The party which supports the ancient state of things, often treats resistance as rebellion, and captives as traitors. The opposite party, supporting also by the sword principles believed to be right, will admit of no departure from established usage, to its prejudice; and may be expected, if possessing the power, to endeavour, by retaliating injuries, to compel the observance of a more just and humane system. But they participate in the fault imputable to their adversaries, by manifesting a disposition to punish those whom they deem traitors, with the same severity of which they so loudly and justly complain, when they are themselves its victims.

General Gage, as Commander-in-chief of the British army, in the harshness of spirit which had been excited while governor of Massachusetts, not only threw all his prisoners into a common jail, but rejected every proposition for an exchange of them. When the command devolved on Sir William Howe, this absurd system was abandoned, and an exchange[1] took place to a considerable extent. But the Americans had not made a sufficient number of prisoners to relieve all their citizens, and many of them still remained in confinement. Representations were continually received from these unfortunate men, describing in strong terms, the severity of their treatment. They complained of suffering almost the extremity of famine, that even the supply of provisions allowed them was unsound, and that they were crowded into prison ships, where they became the victims of disease.

When charged with conduct so unworthy of his character and station, Sir William Howe positively denied its truth.

It would be unjust to ascribe this excess of inhumanity to an officer who, though perhaps severe in his temper, did not mingle cruelties in his general system, which would excite universal indignation in other wars. It must be admitted that his supplies of provisions were neither good nor abundant; and that the American soldiers, in their own camp, were unhealthy. But the excessive mortality prevailing among the prisoners can be accounted for on no ordinary principles; and the candid, who were least inclined to criminate without cause, have ever been persuaded that, if his orders did not produce the distress which existed, his authority was not interposed with sufficient energy, to correct the abuses which prevailed.

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[1] In the execution of this agreement, the inconveniences arising from having committed the custody of prisoners to the several states, was severely felt. In addition to the delay inseparable from the necessity of inquiring for them, and collecting them from different places, they were often sent in without the knowledge of General Washington; and, in some instances, they passed unobserved, with permits from a state government, through his camp, into that of the enemy. These irregularities, and the remonstrances of the Commander-in-chief at length, induced congress to appoint a commissary of prisoners.

The capture of General Lee furnished an additional ground of controversy on the subject of prisoners. As he had been an officer in the British service, whose resignation had not, perhaps, been received when he entered into that of America, a disposition was, at first, manifested to consider him as a deserter, and he was closely confined. On receiving information of this circumstance, congress directed General Howe to be assured that Lieutenant Colonel Campbell, and five Hessian field-officers, should be detained, and should experience precisely the fate of General Lee. These officers were taken into close custody, and informed that the resolution announced to General Howe should be strictly enforced.

The sentiments of the Commander-in-chief on the subject of retaliation, seem to have been less severe than those of congress. So great was his abhorrence of the cruelties such a practice must generate, that he was unwilling to adopt it in any case not of absolute and apparent necessity. Not believing that of General Lee to be such a case, he remonstrated strongly against these resolutions. But congress remained inflexible; and the officers designated as the objects of retaliation, were kept in rigorous confinement until General Lee was declared to be a prisoner of war.[1]

The resolutions of congress respecting the prisoners taken at the Cedars, were also the source of much embarrassment and chagrin to the Commander-in-chief. Alleging that the capitulation had been violated on the part of the enemy, and that the savages had been permitted to murder some of the prisoners, and to plunder others, they withheld their sanction from the agreement entered into by General Arnold with Captain Forster, and refused to allow other prisoners to be returned in exchange for those liberated under that agreement, until the murderers should be given up, and compensation made for the baggage said to have been plundered. As the fact alleged was not clearly established, Sir William Howe continued to press General Washington on this subject. Reminding him of the importance of a punctilious observance of faith, plighted in engagements like that made by General Arnold, he persisted to hold the Commander-in-chief personally bound for an honourable compliance with military stipulations entered into by an officer under his authority.

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[1] See note No. XII at the end of the volume.

General Washington, feeling the keenness of the reproach, pressed congress to change their resolution on this subject; but his remonstrances were, for a long time, unavailing.

After the sufferings of the prisoners in New York had been extreme, and great numbers had perished in confinement, the survivors were liberated for the purpose of being exchanged; but so miserable was their condition, that many of them died on their way home. For the dead as well as the living, General Howe claimed a return of prisoners, while General Washington contended that reasonable deductions should be made for those who were actually dead, of diseases under which they laboured when permitted to leave the British prisons.

Until this claim should be admitted, General Howe rejected any partial exchange. General Washington was immoveable in his determination to repel it; and thus all hope of being relieved in the ordinary mode appeared to be taken from those whom the fortune of war had placed in the power of the enemy.

In the mean time, the sufferings of the American prisoners increased with the increasing severity of the season. Information continued to be received, that they suffered almost the extremity of famine. Repeated remonstrances, made on this subject to the British general, were answered by a denial of the fact. He continued to aver that the same food, both in quantity and quality, was issued to the prisoners, as to British troops when in transports, or elsewhere, not on actual duty; and that every tenderness was extended to them, which was compatible with the situation of his army. He yielded to the request made by General Washington to permit a commissary to visit the jails, and demanded passports for an agent to administer to the wants of British prisoners.

When Mr. Boudinot, the American commissary of prisoners, who was appointed by General Washington to visit the jails in Philadelphia, met Mr. Ferguson, the British commissary, he was informed that General Howe thought it unnecessary for him to come into the city, as he would himself inspect the situation and treatment of the prisoners. There is reason to believe that their causes of complaint, so far as respected provisions, did not exist afterwards in the same degree as formerly; and that the strong measures subsequently taken by congress, were founded on facts of an earlier date.

But clothes and blankets were also necessary, and the difficulty of furnishing them was considerable. General Howe would not permit the purchase of those articles in Philadelphia; and they were not attainable elsewhere.

To compel him to abandon this distressing restriction, and to permit the use of paper money within the British lines, congress resolved, that no prisoner should be exchanged until all the expenditures made in paper for the supplies they received from the United States, should be repaid in specie, at the rate of four shillings and sixpence for each dollar. They afterwards determined, that from the 1st day of February, no British commissary should be permitted to purchase any provisions for the use of prisoners west of New Jersey, but that all supplies for persons of that description should be furnished from British stores.

Sir William Howe remonstrated against the last resolution with great strength and justice, as a decree which doomed a considerable number of prisoners, far removed into the country, to a slow and painful death by famine; since it was impracticable to supply them immediately from Philadelphia. The severity of this order, was in some degree mitigated by a resolution that each British commissary of prisoners should receive provisions from the American commissary of purchases, to be paid for in specie, according to the resolution of the 19th of December, 1777.

About the same time, an order was hastily given by the board of war, which produced no inconsiderable degree of embarrassment; and exposed the Commander-in-chief to strictures not less severe than those he had applied to the British general.

General Washington had consented that a quartermaster, with a small escort, should come out of Philadelphia, with clothes and other comforts for the prisoners who were in possession of the United States. He had expressly stipulated for their security, and had given them a passport.

While they were travelling through the country, information was given to the board of war that General Howe had refused to permit provisions to be sent in to the American prisoners in Philadelphia by water. This information was not correct. General Howe had only requested that flags should not be sent up or down the river without previous permission obtained from himself. On this information, however, the board ordered Lieutenant Colonel Smith immediately to seize the officers, though protected by the passport of General Washington, their horses, carriages, and the provisions destined for the relief of the British prisoners; and to secure them until farther orders, either from the board or from the Commander-in-chief.

General Washington, on hearing this circumstance, despatched one of his aids with orders for the immediate release of the persons and property which had been confined; but the officers refused to proceed on their journey, and returned to Philadelphia.[1]

This untoward event was much regretted by the Commander-in-chief. In a letter received some time afterwards, General Howe, after expressing his willingness that the American prisoners should be visited by deputy commissaries, who should inspect their situation, and supply their wants required, as the condition on which this indulgence should be granted, "that a similar permit should be allowed to persons appointed by him, which should be accompanied with the assurance of General Washington, that his authority will have sufficient weight to prevent any interruption to their progress, and any insult to their persons." This demand was ascribed to the treatment to which officers under the protection of his passport had already been exposed.

General Washington lamented the impediment to the exchange of prisoners, which had hitherto appeared to be insuperable; and made repeated, but ineffectual efforts to remove it. General Howe had uniformly refused to proceed with any cartel, unless his right to claim for all the diseased and infirm, whom he had liberated, should be previously admitted.

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[1] They alleged that their horses had been disabled, and the clothing embezzled.

At length, after all hope of inducing him to recede from that high ground had been abandoned, he suddenly relinquished it of his own accord, and acceded completely to the proposition of General Washington for the meeting of commissioners, in order to settle equitably the number to which he should be entitled for those he had discharged in the preceding winter. This point being adjusted, commissaries were mutually appointed, who were to meet on the 10th of March, in Germantown, to arrange the details of a general cartel.

The Commander-in-chief had entertained no doubt of his authority to enter into this agreement. On the fourth of March, however, he had the mortification to perceive in a newspaper, a resolution of congress calling on the several states for the amounts of supplies furnished the prisoners, that they might be adjusted according to the rule of the 10th of December, before the exchange should take place.

On seeing this embarrassing resolution, General Washington addressed a letter to Sir William Howe, informing him that particular circumstances had rendered it inconvenient for the American commissioners to attend at the time appointed, and requesting that their meeting should be deferred from the 10th to the 21st of March. The interval was successfully employed in obtaining a repeal of the resolution.

It would seem probable that the dispositions of congress on the subject of an exchange, did not correspond with those of General Washington. From the fundamental principle of the military establishment of the United States at its commencement, an exchange of prisoners would necessarily strengthen the British, much more than the American army. The war having been carried on by troops raised for short times, aided by militia, the American prisoners, when exchanged, returned to their homes as citizens, while those of the enemy again took the field.

General Washington, who was governed by a policy more just, and more permanently beneficial, addressed himself seriously to congress, urging, as well the injury done the public faith, and his own personal honour, by this infraction of a solemn engagement, as the cruelty and impolicy of a system which must cut off for ever all hopes of an exchange, and render imprisonment as lasting as the war. He represented in strong terms the effect such a measure must have on the troops on whom they should thereafter be compelled chiefly to rely, and its impression on the friends of those already in captivity. These remonstrances produced the desired effect, and the resolutions were repealed. The commissioners met according to the second appointment; but, on examining their powers, it appeared that those given by General Washington were expressed to be in virtue of the authority vested in him; while those given by Sir William Howe contained no such declaration.

This omission produced an objection on the part of the United States; but General Howe refused to change the language, alleging that he designed the treaty to be of a personal nature, founded on the mutual confidence and honour of the contracting generals; and had no intention either to bind his government, or to extend the cartel beyond the limits and duration of his own command.

This explanation being unsatisfactory to the American commissioners and General Howe persisting in his refusal to make the required alteration in his powers, the negotiation was broken off, and this fair prospect of terminating the distresses of numerous unfortunate persons passed away, without effecting the good it had promised.

Some time after the failure of this negotiation for a general cartel, Sir William Howe proposed that all prisoners actually exchangeable should be sent in to the nearest posts, and returns made of officer for officer of equal rank, and soldier for soldier, as far as numbers would admit; and that if a surplus of officers should remain, they should be exchanged for an equivalent in privates.

On the representations of General Washington, congress acceded to this proposition, so far as related to the exchange of officer for officer, and soldier for soldier; but rejected the part which admitted an equivalent in privates for a surplus of officers, because the officers captured with Burgoyne were exchangeable within the powers of General Howe. Under this agreement, an exchange took place to a considerable extent; but as the Americans had lost more prisoners than they had taken, unless the army of Burgoyne should be brought into computation, many of their troops were still detained in captivity.

CHAPTER XII

1778. THE position at Valley Forge had been taken for the purpose of covering the country, protecting the magazines, and cutting off all supplies to Philadelphia. Although the intercourse of the inhabitants with that place could not be entirely prevented; the sufferings of the British army from the scarcity of fresh provisions and forage were considerable; and, as the spring opened, several expeditions were undertaken both to relieve their own wants, and to distress the army of the United States.

About the middle of March, Colonel Mawhood and Major Simcoe, who were detached into Jersey at the head of about twelve hundred men, landed at Salem, nearly opposite Reedy Island, and dispersed the small bodies of militia who were stationed in that part of the country.

General Washington had given early intelligence of this expedition to Governor Livingston; and had requested that he would immediately order out the militia to join Colonel Shreve, whose regiment was detached into Jersey; but the legislature had neglected to make provision for paying them; and the governor could not bring them into the field. Colonel Shreve, on his arrival at Haddonfield, the place at which they had been directed to assemble, found less than one hundred men. March 23. Colonel Ellis, their commanding officer, remarked, in a letter to the governor, that "without some standing force, little was to be expected from the militia, who, being alone not sufficient to prevent the incursions of the enemy, each one naturally consults his own safety, by not being found in arms."

Mawhood, of course, was unrestrained; and the devastation committed by his party was wantonly distressing. Its course of destruction was preceded by a summons to Colonel Hand, the commanding officer of the militia, to lay down his arms, which was accompanied with a threat of the consequences to result from his refusal. This threat was too faithfully executed.

After completing his forage, without molestation, Mawhood returned to Philadelphia. During the continuance of this incursion, which lasted six or seven days, not more than two hundred men could be collected to reinforce Colonel Shreve, who was consequently unable to effect any thing, and did not even march to the lower parts of Jersey, which were plundered without restraint.[1]

Not long after this incursion into Jersey, an enterprise was undertaken against General Lacy, who, with a small number of Pennsylvania militia, seldom amounting to six hundred, and sometimes not exceeding fifty, watched the roads leading to Philadelphia on the north side of the Schuylkill, and was generally posted within twenty miles of that town.

This expedition was entrusted to Colonel Abercrombie and Major Simcoe, who avoided all the posts Lacy had established for his security, and threw a body of troops into his rear before he discovered their approach. After a short resistance, he escaped with the loss of a few men killed, and all his baggage. His corps was entirely dispersed, and he was soon afterwards relieved by General Potter.

To maintain the command of the water as far as was practicable, congress had ordered impediments to be sunk in many of the rivers of common use, so as to obstruct the passage up them, and had constructed frigates, and other smaller vessels, to be employed above those impediments or elsewhere, as the occasion might require. Several of them had been commenced above Philadelphia, but were not completed when the British obtained the command of the river. General Washington then became apprehensive for their safety, and repeatedly expressed his desire that they should be sunk in such a manner as to be weighed with difficulty, should any attempt be made to raise them. The persons, however, who were entrusted by congress with this business, supposed it would be equally secure to put plugs in their bottoms, which might be drawn out on the approach of danger.

Against these vessels, and some stores collected at Bordentown, an expedition was planned which ended in their total destruction. General Dickenson was in the neighbourhood, but his force was too small to interrupt the execution of the design; and General Maxwell, who had been ordered to his assistance, was retarded in his march by a heavy rain, which did not obstruct the movement of the British, who passed up the river in vessels.

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[1] See note No. XIV at the end of the volume.

May 18.

To cover the country more effectually on the north of the Schuylkill, to form an advance guard for the security of the main army, and to be in readiness to annoy the rear of the enemy, should he evacuate Philadelphia, an event believed to be in contemplation, General Washington detached the Marquis de Lafayette, with more than two thousand choice troops, to take post near the lines. As this corps formed a very valuable part of the army, the Commander-in-chief recommended in his instructions to General Lafayette the utmost attention to its safety; and, particularly, to avoid any permanent station, as a long continuance in one position would facilitate the execution of measures which might be concerted against him.

The Marquis crossed the Schuylkill and took post near Barren-hill church, eight or ten miles in front of the army. Immediate notice[1] of his arrival was given to Sir William Howe, who reconnoitred his position, and formed a plan to surprise and cut him off.

On the night of the 19th of May, General Grant with five thousand select troops, took the road which leads up the Delaware, and consequently diverges from Barren-hill. After marching some distance, he inclined to the left, and passing White Marsh, where several roads unite, took one leading to Plymouth meeting-house, the position he was directed to occupy, something more than a mile in the rear of the Marquis, between him and Valley Forge. He reached his point of destination rather before sunrise. Here the roads fork; the one leading to the camp of Lafayette, and the other to Matron's ford over the Schuylkill.

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[1] General Wilkinson, in his memoirs, says that this notice was given by a person formerly a lieutenant in Proctor's regiment of artillery, who, disgusted at being discarded from the American service, became a spy to Sir William Howe; and, the better to fulfil his new engagements, kept up his acquaintance with his former comrades, and frequently visited the camp at Valley Forge. To avoid the suspicion which would be excited by his going into Philadelphia, a rendezvous had been established on Frankford Creek, where he met a messenger from General Howe, to whom his communications were delivered. This statement is certainly correct.

In the course of the night, General Gray, with a strong detachment, had advanced up the Schuylkill on its south side, along the ridge road, and taken post at a ford two or three miles in front of the right flank of Lafayette, while the residue of the army encamped on Chestnut hill.

Captain M'Clane, a vigilant partisan of great merit, was posted on the lines some distance in front of Barren-hill. In the course of the night, he fell in with two British grenadiers at Three Mile Run, who informed him of the movement made by Grant, and also that a large body of Germans was getting ready to march up the Schuylkill. Immediately conjecturing the object, M'Clane detached Captain Parr, with a company of riflemen, across the country to Wanderers hill, with orders to harass and retard the column advancing up the Schuylkill, and hastened in person [1] to the camp of Lafayette. He arrived soon after daybreak, and communicated the intelligence he had received. It was, not long afterwards, confirmed by the fire of Parr on the Ridge road, and by an inhabitant who had escaped from White Marsh as the British column passed that place.[2]

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[1] Extracts of letters from the adjutant general and the officer of the day to Captain M'Clane.

Camp Valley Forge, May 21st, 1778

Dear Captain,—I am happy you have with your brave little party conducted with so much honour to yourself. The Marquis effected, owing to your vigilance, a glorious retreat as well as a difficult one.

Signed ALEX SCAMMELL, *Adj. Gen.*

Camp Valley Forge, May 23d, 1778.

Dear Captain,—I am pleased to hear you are still doing something to distinguish yourself in the eyes of your country. I have the pleasure to inform you that your conduct with the Marquis has been very pleasing to his Excellency and the whole army.

I am your obedient servant,
CHARLES SCOTT, *Brig. Gen. and officer of the day.*

[2] The danger with which this detachment was threatened, was perceived from the camp at Valley Forge, soon after it had been communicated to Lafayette. Alarm-guns were fired to announce it to him, and the whole army was put under arms, to act as circumstances might require. It has been erroneously stated that General Washington was unapprised of this movement of the British army until its object was defeated. The author was in camp at the time, saw the Commander-in-chief, accompanied by his aids and some of the general officers ride, soon after sun-rise, to the summit of the hill on the side of which the huts were con-

Thus surrounded with danger, Lafayette took with promptitude and decision the only course which could preserve him. May 20. He instantly put his troops in motion, and passed over at Matson's ford, which was rather nearer to General Grant, than to himself, without being intercepted by that officer, or sustaining a greater loss than nine men.

General Grant, who reached the ground lately occupied by Lafayette soon after it was abandoned, followed his rear, and appeared at the ford just after the Americans had crossed it; but, finding them advantageously posted, did not choose to attack them; and the whole army returned to Philadelphia, having effected nothing.

He did not escape censure for having allowed the great advantage he had acquired, to slip through his hands unused. He might with the utmost certainty have reached Matson's ford before the Marquis, and have cut off the only retreat which remained for him. But the same skill and address were not displayed in executing this plan as in forming it.[1]

In the statement of this affair made by General Lafayette, he represents himself to have advanced the head of a column towards Grant, as if to attack him, while the rear filed off rapidly towards the Schuylkill. This movement gained ground even for the front, which, while it advanced towards the enemy, also approached the river, and at the same time induced General Grant to halt, in order to prepare for battle.

While this manœuvre was performing in the face of the detachment under Grant, a small party was thrown into the church yard, on the road towards General Gray, which also gave the appearance of an intention to attack in that quarter. By these dispositions, happily conceived, and executed with regularity, the Marquis extricated himself from the destruction which had appeared almost inevitable. In a letter to congress, General Washington termed it "a timely and handsome retreat," and certainly the compliment was merited.

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structed, and look anxiously towards the scene of action through a glass. He witnessed too the joy with which they returned after the detachment had crossed the Schuylkill.

[1] It has been said that his troops were excessively fatigued by a march of upwards of twenty miles, and that he waited, confident that the Marquis could not escape him, for information that Gray had reached his position.

It might be supposed that this young nobleman had not displayed the same degree of military talent in guarding against the approach of danger, as in extricating himself from it. But the imputation which generally attaches to an officer who permits an enemy to pass unobserved into his rear, is removed by a circumstance stated by Lafayette. The Pennsylvania militia were posted on his left flank with orders to guard the roads about White Marsh. Without his knowledge, they changed their position, and retired into the rear, leaving that important pass open to the enemy.

This was the last enterprise attempted by Sir William Howe. He resigned the command of the army into the hands of Sir Henry Clinton, and embarked for Great Britain. About the same time, orders were received for the evacuation of Philadelphia. The part it was now evident France was about to take in the war, and the naval force which had been prepared by that power before she declared herself, rendered that city a dangerous position, and determined the administration to withdraw the army from the Delaware.

The preparations for this movement could not be made unobserved; but they indicated equally an embarkation of the whole army, or an intention to march to New York through Jersey. The last was believed by the American chief to be most probable; and he made every exertion to take advantage of the movement. His detachments were called in, and the state governments were pressed to expedite the march of their levies.

In the mean time Sir Henry Clinton hastened his preparations for the evacuation of Philadelphia; and the opinion that he intended to reach New York through Jersey, gained ground.

General Maxwell, with the Jersey brigade, was ordered over the Delaware to take post at Mount Holly, and to join Major General Dickenson, who was assembling the militia of that state for the purpose of co-operating with the continental troops, in breaking down the bridges, felling trees in the roads, and otherwise embarrassing the march of the British General.

In this state of things intelligence was received that great part of the British army had crossed the Delaware, and that the residue would soon follow. June 17.

The opinion of the General officers was required on the course now to be pursued. General Lee, who had been lately exchanged, and whose experience gave great weight to his opinions, was vehement against risking either a general or partial engagement. The British army was computed at ten thousand effective men, and that of the Americans amounted to between ten and eleven thousand. General Lee was decidedly of opinion that, with such an equality of force, it would be "criminal" to hazard an action. He relied much on the advantageous ground on which their late foreign connexions had placed the United States, and contended that defeat alone could now endanger their independence. To this he said the army ought not to be exposed. It would be impossible he thought to bring on a partial action, without risking its being made general, should such be the choice of the enemy, since the detachment which might engage must be supported, or be cut to pieces. A general action ought not to be fought unless the advantage was manifestly with the American army. This at present was not the case. He attributed so much to the superior discipline of the enemy as to be of opinion that the issue of the engagement would be, almost certainly, unfavourable.

General Du Portail, a French officer of considerable reputation, maintained the same opinions; and the Baron de Steuben concurred in them. The American officers seem to have been influenced by the counsels of the Europeans; and, of seventeen Generals, only Wayne and Cadwallader were decidedly in favour of attacking the enemy. Lafayette appeared inclined to that opinion without openly embracing it; and General Greene was inclined to hazard more than the counsels of the majority would sanction. The country, he thought, must be protected; and if, in doing so, an engagement should become unavoidable, it would be necessary to fight.

On the morning of the 18th, Philadelphia was evacuated;[1] and, by two in the afternoon, all the British troops were encamped on the Jersey shore, from Cooper's Creek to Red Bank.

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[1] As the British army moved down Second street, Captain M'Lane, with a few light horse and one hundred infantry, entered the city, and cut off, and captured one Captain, one Provost Marshal, one guide to the army, and thirty privates, without losing a man.

Although they availed themselves to a great extent of the transportation by water, yet their line of march was so lengthened and encumbered by baggage, and the weather was so intensely hot, that they were under the necessity of proceeding slowly. Indeed their movements wore the appearance of purposed delay; and were calculated to favour the opinion that Sir Henry Clinton was willing to be overtaken, and wished for a general engagement.

As his line of march, until he passed Crosswicks, led directly up the Delaware, General Washington found it necessary to make an extensive circuit, and to cross the river at Coryell's Ferry; after which he kept possession of the high grounds in Jersey, thereby retaining the choice of bringing on, or avoiding an action.

As Sir Henry Clinton encamped at, and about, Allentown, the main body of the American army lay in Hopewell township, about five miles from Princeton. June 24. Major General Dickenson, with about one thousand militia, and Maxwell's brigade, hung on Sir Henry Clinton's left flank. General Cadwallader, with Jackson's regiment and a few militia, was in his rear; and Colonel Morgan with a regiment of six hundred men watched his right.

Notwithstanding the almost concurrent opinion of his general officers against risking an action, Washington appears to have been strongly inclined to that measure. He could not be persuaded that, with an army rather superior in point of numbers to his enemy, too much was hazarded by fighting him. The situation of the two armies was, therefore, once more submitted to the consideration of the general officers, who were asked whether it would be adviseable, of choice, to hazard a general action? And, if it would, whether it should be brought on by an immediate general attack, by a partial attack, or by taking such a position as must compel the enemy to become the assailants?

If the council should be of opinion that it was unadviseable to hazard an engagement, then he asked what measures could be taken with safety to the army, to annoy the enemy in his march, should he proceed through the Jerseys?

The proposition respecting a general action was decidedly negative. But it was proposed to strengthen the corps on the left flank of the enemy with a reinforcement of fifteen hundred men, and to preserve, with the main body of the army, a relative position which would enable it to act as circumstances might require.

In pursuance of this opinion, the troops on the lines were strengthened with a detachment of fifteen hundred select men, commanded by General Scott; and the army moved forward the next day to Kingston.

June 25.

Though the council had been almost unanimous against a general action, several officers, whose opinions were highly valued, secretly wished for something more than light skirmishing. Knowing this, General Washington, who was still in favour of an engagement, determined to take his measures on his own responsibility. As the British army moved towards Monmouth court-house, he ordered Brigadier General Wayne, with an additional detachment of one thousand select men, to join the advanced corps. As the continental troops, now constituting the front division, amounted to at least four thousand men, he deemed it proper that they should be commanded by a major general. Lee had a right to claim this tour of duty; but, as he had declared himself openly and strongly against hazarding even a partial engagement, and supposed that nothing further would be attempted than merely to reconnoitre the enemy, and restrain plundering parties, he showed no inclination to assert his claim. Unintentionally promoting the private wishes of General Washington, that the command should be given to an officer whose view of the service comported more with his own, Lee yielded this important tour of duty to Lafayette. The orders given to this general were, to proceed immediately with the detachment; and, after forming a junction with General Scott, and taking command of the troops on the lines, to gain the enemy's left flank and rear; give him every practicable annoyance; and attack by detachment, or with his whole force, as the occasion might require.

These dispositions and orders could scarcely fail to bring on an engagement. Wayne had openly supported that measure; and Lafayette, though against seeking a general action, had been in favour of a partial one. Of consequence, should any proper occasion offer, he would certainly attack with his whole force, which would as certainly produce such a state of things as would render it proper to support him with the whole army.

Immediately after the march of this detachment, General Washington moved to Cranberry, that he might be in readiness to support his front division.

June 26.

The intense heat of the weather; a heavy storm; and a temporary want of provisions, prevented the army from continuing its march that day. The advanced corps had pressed forward, and taken a position about five miles in rear of the British army, with the intention of attacking it next morning on its march. Thinking this corps too remote to be supported in case of action, General Washington ordered the marquis to file off by his left towards Englishtown. These orders were executed early in the morning of the twenty-seventh.

Lafayette had scarcely taken command of the advanced party, when General Lee began to regret having yielded it to him. He perceived that, in the opinion of all the general officers, great importance was attached to it, and that his reputation was in danger of being impaired by connecting his strenuous opposition to even a partial action, with his declining the command of a very strong detachment, which, it was believed, would engage the rear of the enemy. He therefore solicited earnestly for the command he had before declined.

To relieve the feelings of Lee, without wounding those of Lafayette, General Washington detached him with two additional brigades to Englishtown, to support the marquis. He would, of course, have the direction of the whole front division, which would now amount to five thousand continental troops; but it was expressly stipulated, that if any enterprise had been already formed by Lafayette, it should be carried into execution, as if the commanding officer had not been changed. Lee acceded to this condition; and, with two additional brigades, joined the front division of the army, encamped at Englishtown. The rear division also moved forward, and encamped about three miles in his rear. Morgan's corps still hovered on the right flank of the British, and General Dickenson on their left.

Sir Henry Clinton occupied the high grounds about Monmouth court-house, having his right flank in the skirt of a small wood, while his left was secured by a very thick one, and a morass running towards his rear. His whole front was also covered by a wood, and for a considerable distance towards his left, by a morass.

This position seemed unassailable; and the British were within twelve miles of the high grounds about Middletown, after reaching which they would be perfectly secure.

Under these circumstances, General Washington ordered Lee to attack the British rear the moment it should move from its ground.

About five in the morning, intelligence was received from June 28. General Dickenson that the front of the enemy was in motion. The troops were immediately put under arms, and Lee was ordered to attack the rear, "unless there should be powerful reasons to the contrary." He was at the same time informed that the rear division would be on its march to support him.

Sir Henry Clinton had observed the appearances on his flanks and rear on the twenty-seventh; and, conjecturing that the American army was in his neighbourhood, had changed the order of his march. The baggage was placed under the care of General Knyphausen, while the strength and flower of his army, entirely unincumbered, formed the rear division, under the particular command of Lord Cornwallis, who was accompanied by the Commander-in-chief.

To avoid pressing on Knyphausen, Cornwallis remained on his ground until about eight; and then, descending from the heights of Freehold into an extensive plain, took up his line of march in rear of the front division.[1]

General Lee had made dispositions for executing the orders given the preceding evening, and repeated in the morning; and, soon after the British rear had moved from its ground, prepared to attack it. General Dickenson had been directed to detach some of his best troops, to take such a position as to co-operate with him; and Morgan was ordered to act on the right flank.

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[1] Letter of Sir Henry Clinton.

Lee appeared on the heights of Freehold soon after Lord Cornwallis had left them; and, following the British into the plain, ordered General Wayne to attack the rear of their covering party with sufficient vigour to check it, but not to press it so closely as either to force it up to the main body, or to draw reinforcements to its aid. In the mean time, he intended to gain the front of this party by a shorter road, and, intercepting its communication with the line, to bear it off before it could be assisted.

While in the execution of this design, a gentleman in the *suite* of General Washington came up to gain intelligence; and Lee communicated to him his present object.

Before he reached the point of destination, there was reason to believe that the British rear was much stronger than had been conjectured. The intelligence on this subject being contradictory, and the face of the country well calculated to conceal the truth, he deemed it adviseable to ascertain the fact himself.

Sir Henry Clinton, soon after the rear division was in full march, received intelligence that an American column had appeared on his left flank. This being a corps of militia was soon dispersed, and the march was continued. When his rear guard had descended from the heights, he saw it followed by a strong corps, soon after which a cannonade was commenced upon it; and, at the same time, a respectable force showed itself on each of his flanks. Suspecting a design on his baggage, he determined to attack the troops in his rear so vigorously, as to compel a recall of those on his flanks; and, for this purpose, marched back his whole rear division. This movement was in progress as Lee advanced for the purpose of reconnoitring. He soon perceived his mistake respecting the force of the British rear, but still determined to engage on that ground, although his judgment disapproved the measure; there being a morass immediately in his rear, which would necessarily impede the reinforcements which might be advancing to his aid, and embarrass his retreat should he be finally overpowered.

This was about ten. While both armies were preparing for action, General Scott (as stated by General Lee) mistook an oblique march of an American column for a retreat; and, in the apprehension of being abandoned, left his position, and repassed the ravine in his rear.

Being himself of opinion that the ground was unfavourable, Lee did not correct the error he ascribed to Scott, but ordered the whole detachment to regain the heights. He was closely pressed, and some slight skirmishing ensued without much loss on either side.

As soon as the firing announced the commencement of the action, the rear division of the army advanced rapidly to the support of the front. As they approached the scene of action, General Washington, who had received no intelligence from Lee giving notice of his retreat, rode forward, and, to his utter astonishment and mortification, met the advanced corps retiring before the enemy, without having made a single effort to maintain its ground. The troops he first saw neither understood the motives which had governed General Lee, nor his present design; and could give no other information than that, by his orders, they had fled without fighting.

General Washington rode to the rear of the division, where he met General Lee, to whom he spoke in terms of some warmth, implying disapprobation of his conduct.

Orders were immediately given to Colonel Stewart and Lieutenant Colonel Ramsay to form their regiments for the purpose of checking the pursuit; and General Lee was directed to take proper measures with the residue of his force to stop the British column on that ground. The Commander-in-chief then rode back to arrange the rear division of the army.

These orders were executed with firmness; and, when forced from his ground, Lee brought off his troops in good order, and was directed to form in the rear of Englishtown.

This check afforded time to draw up the left wing and second line of the American army on an eminence, covered by a morass in front. Lord Stirling, who commanded the left wing, brought up a detachment of artillery under Lieutenant Colonel Carrington, and some field pieces, which played with considerable effect on a division of the British which had passed the morass, and was pressing on to the charge. These pieces, with the aid of several parties of infantry, effectually stopped the advance of the enemy.

Finding themselves warmly opposed in front, the British attempted to turn the left flank of the American army, but were repulsed. They then attempted the right with as little success. General Greene had advanced a body of troops with artillery to a commanding piece of ground in his front, which not only disappointed the design of turning the right, but enfiladed the party which yet remained in front of the left wing. At this moment, General Wayne was advanced with a body of infantry to engage them in front, who kept up so hot and well directed a fire, that they soon withdrew behind the ravine, to the ground on which the action had commenced immediately after the arrival of General Washington.[1]

The position now taken by the British army was very strong. Both flanks were secured by thick woods and morasses; and their front was accessible only through a narrow pass. The day had been intensely hot, and the troops were much fatigued. Notwithstanding these circumstances, General Washington resolved to renew the engagement. For this purpose he ordered Brigadier General Poor, with his own and the North Carolina brigade, to gain their right flank, while Woodford with his brigade should turn their left. At the same time the artillery was ordered to advance and play on their front. These orders were obeyed with alacrity; but the impediments on the flanks of the British were so considerable that, before they could be overcome, it was nearly dark. Farther operations were therefore deferred until next morning; and the brigades which had been detached to the flanks of the British army continued on their ground through the night, and the other troops lay on the field of battle with their arms in their hands. General Washington passed the night in his cloak in the midst of his soldiers.

The British employed the early part of the night in removing their wounded; and, about midnight, marched away in such silence that their retreat was not perceived until day.

As it was certain that they must gain the high grounds about

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[1] General Lafayette, in a communication made to the author respecting this battle, expresses himself thus: "Never was General Washington greater in war than in this action. His presence stopped the retreat. His dispositions fixed the victory. His fine appearance on horseback, his calm courage, roused by the animation produced by the vexation of the morning, (le depit de la matinée) gave him the air best calculated to excite enthusiasm."

Middletown before they could be overtaken; as the face of the country afforded no prospect of opposing their embarkation; and as the battle already fought had terminated in a manner to make a general impression favourable to the American arms; it was thought proper to relinquish the pursuit. Leaving a detachment to hover about the British rear, the main body of the army moved towards the Hudson.

The Commander-in-chief was highly gratified with the conduct of his troops in this action. Their behaviour, he said, after recovering from the first surprise occasioned by the unexpected retreat of the advanced corps, could not be surpassed. General Wayne was particularly mentioned; and the artillery were spoken of in terms of high praise.

The loss of the Americans in the battle of Monmouth was eight officers and sixty-one privates killed, and about one hundred and sixty wounded. Among the slain were Lieutenant Colonel Bonner of Pennsylvania, and Major Dickenson of Virginia, both of whom were much regretted. One hundred and thirty were missing; but a considerable number of these afterwards rejoined their regiments.

In his official letter, Sir Henry Clinton states his dead and missing at four officers, and one hundred and eighty-four privates. His wounded at sixteen officers and one hundred and fifty-four privates. This account, so far as respects the dead, can not be correct, as four officers, and two hundred and forty-five privates were buried on the field by persons appointed for the purpose, who made their report to the Commander-in-chief; and some few were afterwards found, so as to increase the number to nearly three hundred. The uncommon heat of the day proved fatal to several on both sides.

As usual, when a battle has not been decisive, both parties claimed the victory. In the early part of the day, the advantage was certainly with the British; in the latter part, it may be pronounced with equal certainty to have been with the Americans. They maintained their ground, repulsed the enemy, were prevented only by the night, and by the retreat of the hostile army from renewing the action, and suffered less in killed and wounded than their adversaries.

It is true that Sir Henry Clinton effected what he states to have been his principal object,—the safety of his baggage. But when it is recollected that the American officers had decided against hazarding an action, that this advice must have trammeled the conduct, and circumscribed the views of the Commander-in-chief, he will be admitted to have effected no inconsiderable object in giving the American arms that appearance of superiority which was certainly acquired by this engagement.

Independent of the loss sustained in the action, the British army was considerably weakened in its march from Philadelphia to New York. About one hundred prisoners were made, and near one thousand soldiers, chiefly foreigners, deserted while passing through Jersey.

The conduct of Lee was generally disapproved. As, however, he had possessed a large share of the confidence and good opinion of the Commander-in-chief, it is probable that explanations might have been made which would have rescued him from the imputations that were cast on him, and have restored him to the esteem of the army, could his haughty temper have brooked the indignity he believed to have been offered him on the field of battle. General Washington had taken no measures in consequence of the events of that day, and would probably have come to no resolution concerning them without an amicable explanation, when he received from Lee a letter expressed in very unbecoming terms, in which he, in the tone of a superior, required reparation for the injury sustained "from the very singular expressions" said to have been used on the day of the action by the Commander-in-chief.

July 30.

This letter was answered by an assurance that, so soon as circumstances would admit of an inquiry, he should have an opportunity of justifying himself, to the army, to America, and to the world in general; or of convincing them that he had been guilty of disobedience of orders, and misbehaviour before the enemy. On his expressing a wish for a speedy investigation of his conduct, and for a court-martial rather than a court of inqury, he was arrested.

First. For disobedience of orders in not attacking the enemy on the 28th of June, agreeably to repeated instructions.

Secondly. For misbehaviour before the enemy on the same day, in making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat.

Thirdly. For disrespect to the Commander-in-chief in two letters.

Before this correspondence had taken place, strong and specific charges of misconduct had been made against General Lee by several officers of his detachment, and particularly by Generals Wayne and Scott. In these, the transactions of the day, not being well understood, were represented in colours much more unfavourable to Lee, than facts, when properly explained, would seem to justify. These representations, most probably, induced the strong language of the second article in the charge. A court-martial, over which Lord Stirling presided, after a tedious investigation, found him guilty of all the charges exhibited against him, and sentenced him to be suspended for one year. This sentence was, afterwards, though with some hesitation, approved, almost unanimously, by congress. The court softened, in some degree, the severity of the second charge, by finding him guilty, not in its very words, but "of misbehaviour before the enemy, by making an unnecessary, and, in some few instances, a disorderly retreat."

Lee defended himself with his accustomed ability. He proved that, after the retreat had commenced, in consequence of General Scott's repassing the ravine, on the approach of the enemy, he had designed to form on the first advantageous piece of ground he could find; and that, in his own opinion, and in the opinion of some other officers, no safe and advantageous position had presented itself until he met General Washington; at which time it was his intention to fight the enemy on the very ground afterwards taken by that officer. He suggested a variety of reasons in justification of his retreat, which, if they do not absolutely establish its propriety, give it so questionable a form as to render it probable that a public examination never would have taken place, could his proud spirit have stooped to offer explanation instead of outrage, to the Commander-in-chief.

His suspension gave general satisfaction through the army. Without being masters of his conduct as a military man, they perfectly understood the insult offered to their general by his letters; and, whether rightly or not, believed his object to have been to disgrace Washington, and to obtain the supreme command for himself. So devotedly were all ranks attached to their general, that the mere suspicion of such a design, would have rendered his continuance in the army extremely difficult.

Whatever judgment may be formed on the propriety of his retreat, it is not easy to justify, either the omission to keep the Commander-in-chief continually informed of his situation and intentions, or the very rude letters written after the action was over.

The battle of Monmouth gave great satisfaction to congress. A resolution was passed unanimously, thanking General Washington for the activity with which he marched from the camp at Valley Forge, in pursuit of the enemy; for his distinguished exertions in forming the line of battle, and for his great good conduct in the action; and he was requested to signify the thanks of congress to the officers and men under his command, who distinguished themselves by their conduct and valour in the battle.

After remaining a few days on the high grounds of Middletown, Sir Henry Clinton proceeded to Sandy-hook, whence his army passed over to New York. July 5.

CHAPTER XIII

BEFORE General Washington could reach the ground he designed to occupy, intelligence was received that a powerful French fleet, under the command of the Count 1778. D'Estaing, had appeared off Chingoteague inlet, the northern extremity of the coast of Virginia.

The Count had sailed from Toulon on the 13th of April, with twelve ships of the line and six frigates, having on board a respectable body of land forces. His destination was the Delaware; and he hoped to find the British fleet in that river, and their army in Philadelphia. An uncommon continuance of adverse winds, protracted his voyage across the Atlantic to the extraordinary length of eighty-seven days. This unusual circumstance saved the British fleet and army.

On reaching the capes of the Delaware, the Count announced his arrival to congress; and, having failed in accomplishing his first object, proceeded along the coast to New York, in the hope of being able to attack the British fleet in the harbour of that place.

Sir Henry Clinton was again indebted to some fortunate incidents for his safety.

The violent storms of the preceding winter had broken through the narrow isthmus by which Sandy-hook was connected with the continent, and had converted the peninsula into an island. This rendered it necessary for the army to pass from the main to the hook on a bridge of boats, which would have been impracticable, if obstructed by a superior fleet. It was effected the very day on which D'Estaing appeared off Chingoteague inlet.

At Paramus, in Jersey, General Washington received a letter from the president of congress, advising him of this important July 13. event, and requesting that he would concert measures with the Count for conjoint and offensive operations.

The next day he received a second letter on the same subject, enclosing two resolutions, one directing him to co-operate with the French admiral, and the other authorising him to call on the states from New Hampshire to New Jersey inclusive, for such aids of militia as he might deem necessary for the operations of the allied arms.

He determined to proceed immediately to the White Plains, whence the army might co-operate with more facility in the execution of any attempt which might be made by the fleet, and despatched Lieutenant Colonel Laurens, one of his aids de camp, with all the information relative to the enemy, as well as to his own army, which might be useful to D'Estaing. Lieutenant Colonel Laurens was authorised to consult on future conjoint operations, and to establish conventional signals for the purpose of facilitating the communication of intelligence.

The French admiral, on arriving off the Hook, despatched Major de Choisi, a gentleman of his family, to General Washington, for the purpose of communicating fully his views and his strength. His first object was to attack New York. If this should be found impracticable, he was desirous of turning his attention to Rhode Island. To assist in coming to a result on these enterprises, General Washington despatched Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton with such farther communications as had been suggested, by inquiries made since the departure of Lieutenant Colonel Laurens.

Fearing that the water on the bar at the entrance of the harbour, was not of sufficient depth to admit the passage of the largest ships of the French fleet without much difficulty and danger, General Washington had turned his attention to other objects which might be, eventually, pursued. General Sullivan, who commanded the troops in Rhode Island, was directed to prepare for an enterprise against Newport; and the Marquis de Lafayette was detached with two brigades July 21. to join him at Providence. The next day Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton returned to camp with the final determination of the Count D'Estaing to relinquish the meditated attack on the fleet in the harbour of New York, in consequence of the impracticability of passing the bar.

General Greene was immediately ordered to Rhode Island, of which state he was a native; and Lieutenant Colonel Laurens was directed to attach himself to the French admiral, and to facilitate all his views by procuring whatever might give them effect; after which he was to act with the army under Sullivan.

The resolution being taken to proceed against Rhode Island, the fleet got under way, and, on the 25th of July, appeared off Newport, and cast anchor about five miles from that place, just without Brenton's edge; soon after which, General Sullivan went on board the Admiral, and concerted with him a plan of operations for the allied forces. The fleet was to enter the harbour, and land the troops of his Christian Majesty on the west side of the island, a little to the north of Dyer's island. The Americans were to land at the same time on the opposite coast, under cover of the guns of a frigate.

Although the appearance of the French fleet had animated the whole country, and had produced a considerable degree of alacrity for the service; although the success of the enterprise essentially depended on maintaining a superiority at sea, which there was much reason to apprehend would soon be wrested from them; yet such are the delays inseparable from measures to bring husbandmen into the field as soldiers, that the operations against Newport were suspended for several days on this account.

As the militia of New Hampshire and Massachusetts approached General Sullivan joined General Greene at Aug. 8. Tiverton, and it was agreed with the Admiral that the fleet should enter the main channel immediately, and that the descent should be made the succeeding day. The ships of war passed the British batteries and entered the harbour, without receiving or doing any considerable damage.

The militia not arriving precisely at the time they were expected, General Sullivan could not hazard the movement which had been concerted, and stated to the Count the necessity of postponing it till the next day. Meanwhile, the preparations for the descent being perceived, General Pigot drew the troops which had been stationed on the north end of the island into the lines at Newport.

On discovering this circumstance the next morning, Sullivan determined to avail himself of it, and to take immediate possession of the works which had been abandoned. The whole army crossed the east passage, and landed on the north end of Rhode Island. This movement gave great offence to the Admiral, who resented the indelicacy supposed to have been committed by Sullivan in landing before the French, and without consulting him.

Unfortunately, some difficulties, on subjects of mere punctilio, had previously arisen. The Count D'Estaing was a land as well as sea officer, and held the high rank of lieutenant general in the service of France. Sullivan being only a major general, some misunderstanding on this delicate point had been apprehended; and General Washington had suggested to him the necessity of taking every precaution to avoid it. This, it was supposed, had been effected in their first conference, in which it was agreed that the Americans should land first, after which the French should land, to be commanded by the Count D'Estaing in person. The motives for this arrangement are not stated; but it was most probably made solely with a view to the success of the enterprise. Either his own after-reflections or the suggestions of others dissatisfied the Count with it, and he insisted that the descent should be made on both sides of the island precisely at the same instant, and that one wing of the American army should be attached to the French, and land with them. He also declined commanding in person, and wished the Marquis de Lafayette to take charge of the French troops as well as of the Americans attached to them.

It being feared that this alteration of the plan might endanger both its parts, D'Estaing was prevailed on to reduce his demand from one wing of the American army to one thousand militia. When, afterwards, General Sullivan crossed over into the island before the time to which he had himself postponed the descent, and without giving previous notice to the Count of this movement, some suspicions seem to have been excited, that the measure was taken with other views than were avowed, and no inconsiderable degree of excitement was manifested. The Count refused to answer Sullivan's letter, and charged Lieutenant Colonel Fleury, who delivered it, with being more an American than a Frenchman.

At this time a British fleet appeared, which, after sailing close into the land, and communicating with General Pigot, withdrew some distance, and came to anchor off point Judith, just without the narrow inlet leading into the harbour.

After it had been ascertained that the destination of the Count D'Estaing was America, he was followed by a squadron of twelve ships of the line under Admiral Byron, who was designed to relieve Lord Howe, that nobleman having solicited his recall. The vessels composing this squadron meeting with weather unusually bad for the season, and being separated in different storms, arrived, after lingering through a tedious passage, in various degrees of distress, on different and remote parts of the American coast. Between the departure of D'Estaing from the Hook on the 23d of July, and the 30th of that month, four ships of sixty-four and fifty guns arrived at Sandy Hook.

This addition to the British fleet, though it left Lord Howe considerably inferior to the Count D'Estaing, determined him to attempt the relief of Newport. He sailed from New York on the 6th of August; and, on the 9th, appeared in sight of the French fleet, before intelligence of his departure could be received by the Admiral.

At the time of his arrival the wind set directly into the harbour, so that it was impossible to get out of it; but it shifted suddenly to the north east the next morning, and the Count Aug. 10. determined to stand out to sea, and give battle. Previous to leaving port, he informed General Sullivan that, on his return, he would land his men as that officer should advise.

Not choosing to give the advantage of the weather-gage, Lord Howe also weighed anchor and stood out to sea. He was followed by D'Estaing; and both fleets were soon out of sight.

The militia were now arrived; and Sullivan's army amounted to ten thousand men. Some objections were made by Lafayette to his commencing operations before the return of D'Estaing. That officer advised that the army should be advanced to a position in the neighbourhood of Newport, but should not break ground until the Count should be in readiness to act in concert with them. It was extremely desirable to avoid whatever might give offence to the great ally on whose assistance so much depended; but time was deemed of such importance to an army which could not be kept long together, that this advice was overruled, and it was determined to commence the siege immediately.

Aug. 15.

Before this determination could be executed, a furious storm blew down all the tents, rendered the arms unfit for immediate use, and greatly damaged the ammunition, of which fifty rounds had just been delivered to each man. The soldiers, having no shelter, suffered extremely; and several perished in the storm, which continued three days. On the return of fair weather the siege was commenced, and continued without any material circumstance for several days.

As no intelligence had been received from the Admiral, the situation of the American army was becoming very critical. On the evening of the 19th, their anxieties were relieved for a moment by the reappearance of the French fleet.

The two Admirals, desirous the one of gaining, and the other of retaining the advantage of the wind, had employed two days in manœuvring, without coming to action. Towards the close of the second, they were on the point of engaging, when they were separated by the violent storm which had been felt so severely on shore, and which dispersed both fleets. Some single vessels afterwards fell in with each other, but no important capture was made; and both fleets retired in a very shattered condition, the one to the harbour of New York, and the other to that of Newport.

A letter was immediately despatched by D'Estaing to Sullivan, informing him that, in pursuance of orders from the King, and of the advice of all his officers, he had taken the resolution to carry the fleet to Boston. His instructions directed him to sail for Boston should his fleet meet with any disaster, or should a superior British fleet appear on the coast.

This communication threw Sullivan and his army into despair. General Greene, and the Marquis de Lafayette were directed to wait on the Admiral with a letter from Sullivan remonstrating against this resolution, and to use their utmost endeavours to induce him to change it.

They represented to him the certainty of carrying the garrison if he would co-operate with them only two days, urged the impolicy of exposing the fleet at sea, in its present condition, represented the port of Boston as equally insecure with that of

Newport, and added that the expedition had been undertaken on condition that the French fleet and army should co-operate with them; that confiding in this co-operation, they had brought stores into the island to a great amount, and that to abandon the enterprise in the present state of things, would be a reproach and disgrace to their arms. To be deserted at such a critical moment would have a pernicious influence on the minds of the American people, and would furnish their domestic foes, as well as the common enemy with the means of animadverting severely on their prospects from an alliance with those who could abandon them under circumstances such as the present. They concluded with wishing that the utmost harmony and confidence might subsist between the two nations, and especially between their officers; and entreated the Admiral, if any personal indiscretions had appeared in conducting the expedition, not to permit them to prejudice the common cause.

Whatever impression these observations may have made on the Count, they could not change the determination he had formed.

General Greene, in his representation of this conversation, stated that the principal officers on board the fleet were the enemies of D'Estaing. He was properly a land officer, and they were dissatisfied with his appointment in the navy. Determined to thwart his measures, and to prevent, as far as could be justified, his achieving any brilliant exploit, they availed themselves of the letter of his instructions, and unanimously persevered in advising him to relinquish the enterprise, and sail for Boston. He could not venture, with such instructions, to act against their unanimous opinion; and, although personally disposed to re-enter the harbour, declined doing so, and sailed from the island.

On the return of Greene and Lafayette, Sullivan made yet another effort to retain the fleet. He addressed a second letter to the Admiral, pressing him, in any event, to leave his land forces. The bearer of this letter was also charged with a protest signed by all the general officers in Rhode Island except Lafayette, the only effect of which was to irritate D'Estaing, who proceeded, without delay, on his voyage to Boston.

Thus abandoned by the fleet, Sullivan called a council of general officers, who were in favour of attempting an assault if five thousand volunteers who had seen nine months service could be obtained for the enterprise; but the departure of the fleet had so discouraged the militia, that this number could not be procured; and, in a few days, the army was reduced by desertion to little more than five thousand men. As the British were estimated at six thousand, it was determined to raise the siege, and retire to the north end of the island, there to fortify, and wait the result of another effort to induce D'Estaing to return.

In the night of the 28th, the army retired by two roads leading to the works on the north end of the island, having its rear covered by Colonels Livingston and Laurens, who commanded light parties on each.

Early next morning the retreat was discovered by the British, who followed in two columns, and were engaged on each road by Livingston and Laurens, who retreated slowly and kept up the action with skill and spirit until the English were brought into the neighbourhood of the main body of the Americans, drawn up in order of battle on the ground of their encampment. The British formed on Quaker Hill, a very strong piece of ground, something more than a mile in front of the American line.

Sullivan's rear was covered by strong works; and in his front, rather to the right, was a redoubt. In this position, the two armies cannonaded each other for some time, and a succession of skirmishes was kept up in front of both lines until about two in the afternoon, when the British advanced in force, attempted to turn the right flank, and made demonstrations of an intention to carry the redoubt in front of the right wing. General Greene, who commanded that wing, advanced to its support, and a sharp engagement was continued for about half an hour, when the British retreated to Quaker Hill. The cannonade was renewed, and kept up intermingled with slight skirmishing until night.

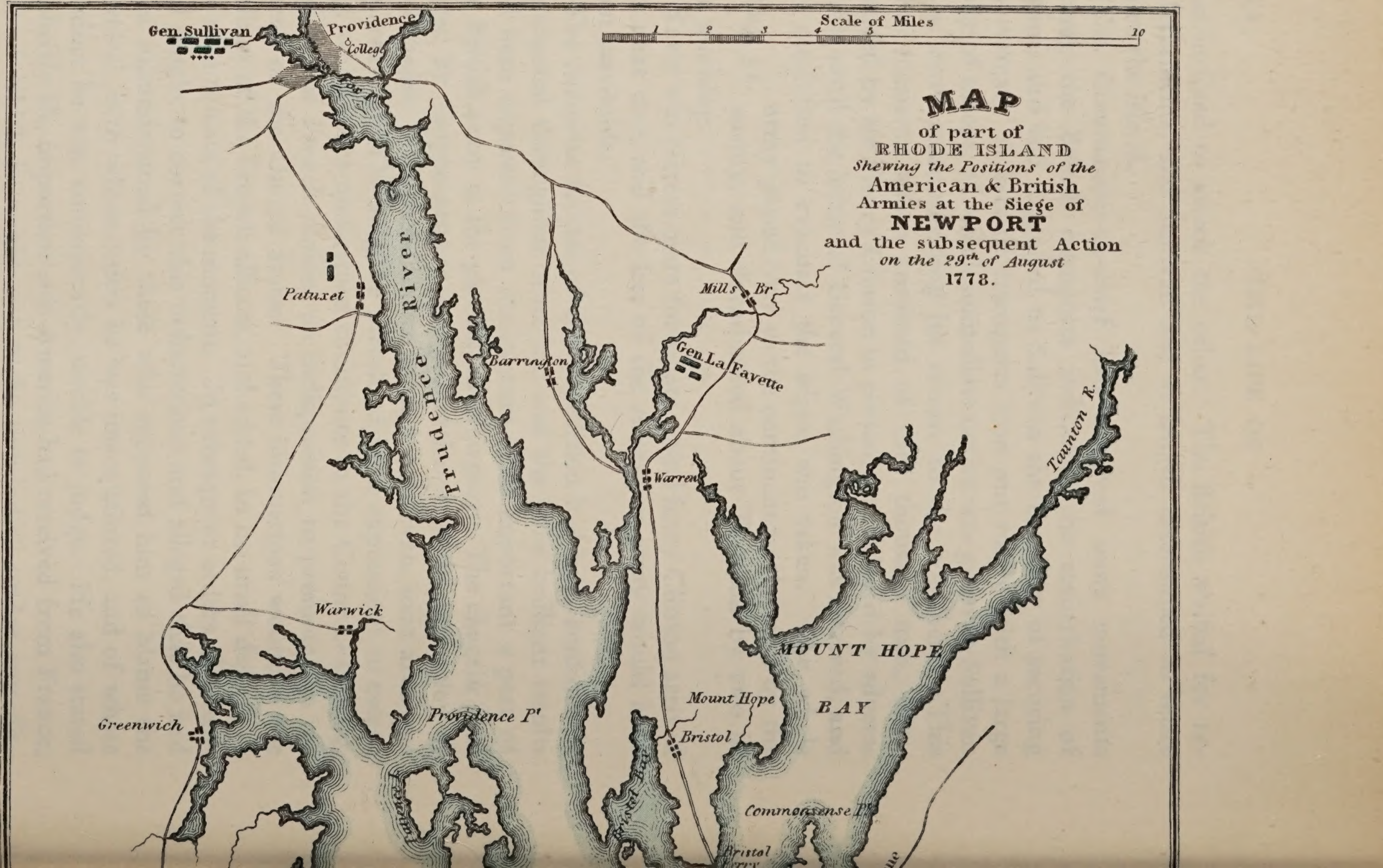
According to the return made by General Sullivan, his loss in killed, wounded and missing was two hundred and eleven. That of the British, as stated by General Pigot, amounted to two hundred and sixty.

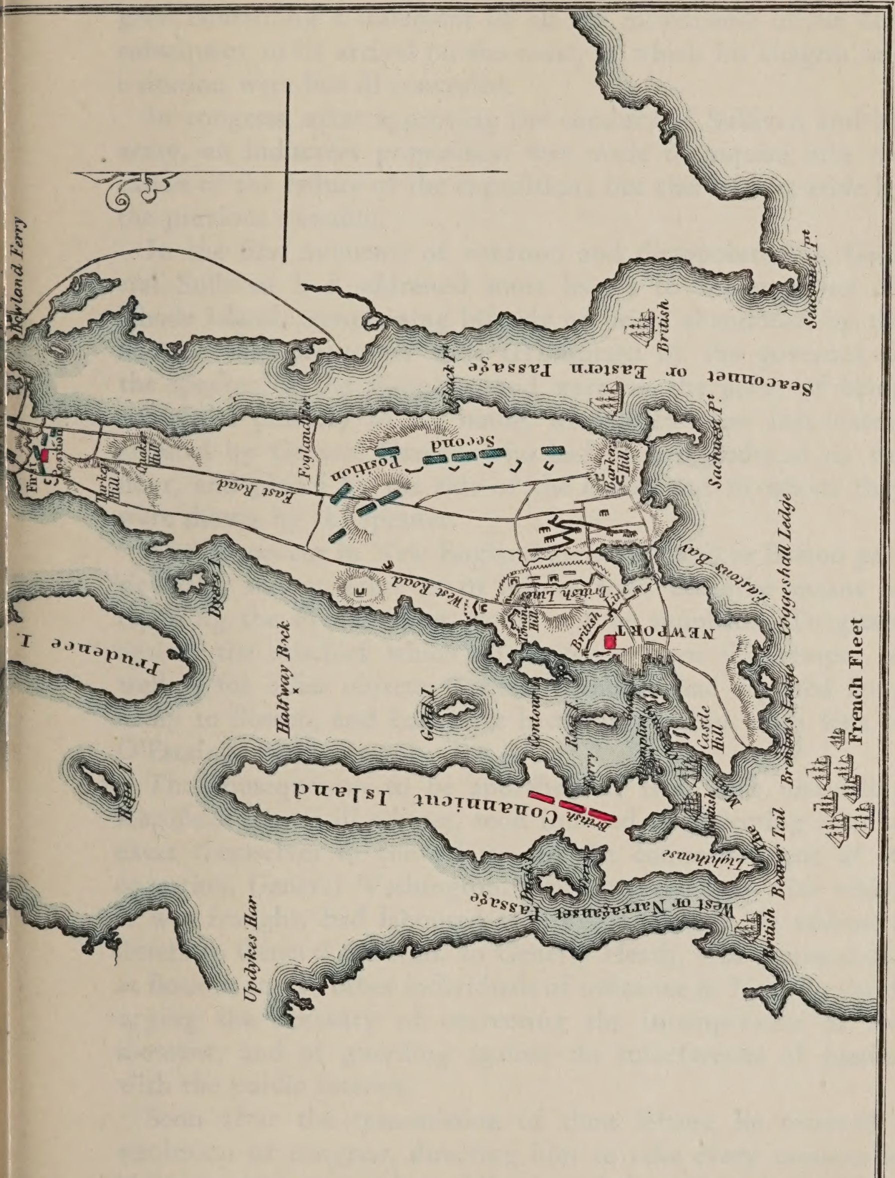
The next day, the cannonade was renewed, but neither army was inclined to attack the other. The British waited for reinforcements, and Sullivan had at length determined to retire from the island.

The Commander-in-chief had observed some movements among the British transports indicating the embarkation of troops, and had suggested to Sullivan the necessity of securing his retreat. A fleet of transports soon put to sea with a large body of troops, of which immediate notice was given to Sullivan in a letter recommending his retreat to the continent. This reinforcement, which consisted of four thousand men, commanded by Sir Henry Clinton in person, was delayed by adverse winds until the letter of General Washington was received, and the resolution to evacuate the island was taken. The whole army passed over to the continent unobserved by the enemy, and disembarked about Tiverton by two in the morning. Aug. 31.

Never was retreat more fortunate. Sir Henry Clinton arrived the next day, and the loss of the American army would have been inevitable.

The complete success of this expedition had been confidently anticipated throughout America; and the most brilliant results had been expected from the capture of so important a part of the British army as the garrison of Newport. The chagrin produced by disappointment was proportioned to the exaltation of their hopes. In general orders issued by Sullivan, soon after the departure of D'Estaing, he permitted some expressions to escape him which were understood to impute to the Count D'Estaing, and to the French nation, an indisposition to promote the interests of the United States. These insinuations wounded the feelings of the French officers, and added, in no small degree, to the resentments of the moment. In subsequent orders, the General sought to correct this indiscretion; and alleged that he had been misunderstood by those who supposed him to blame the Admiral, with whose orders he was unacquainted, and of whose conduct he was, consequently, unable to judge. He also stated explicitly the important aids America had received from France, aids of which he ought not to be unmindful under any disappointment; and which should prevent a too sudden censure of any movement whatever.


MAP
of part of
RHODE ISLAND
Shewing the Positions of the
American & British
Armies at the Siege of
NEWPORT
and the subsequent Action
on the 29th of August
1778.
Scale of Miles
1
2
3
4
5
10
Gen. Sullivan
Providence
College
Patuxet
River
Prudence
Barrington
Mills Br.
Gen. La Fayette
Warren
Taunton R.
MOUNT HOPE
BAY
Warwick
Greenwich
Providence Pt
Mount Hope
Bristol
Bristol Bay
Commonsense Pt
Bristol



Howland Ferry
First Position
Turkey Hill
Quaker Hill
East Road
Fogland Ferry
Black Pt
Second Position
Seaconnet or Eastern Passage
British
Seaconnet Pt
Sachuest Pt
Parker Hill
West Road
Dyers I.
Prudence I.
Tominy Hill
British Lines
British Line
NEWPORT
Eastons Bay
Coggeshall Ledge
Halfway Rock
Gould I.
Hope I.
Conannicut Island
Rose I.
Ferry
Dumpling
Castle Hill
Brentons Ledge
French Fleet
British
Lighthouse
Beaver Tail
West or Narraganset Passage
Dutch I.
Ferry
Updykes Har
British

Engraved by J. Yeager.

The Count D'Estaing, on his part, addressed a letter to congress containing a statement of all the movements of his fleet subsequent to its arrival on the coast, in which his chagrin and irritation were but ill concealed.

In congress, after approving the conduct of Sullivan and his army, an indiscreet proposition was made to inquire into the causes of the failure of the expedition; but this was set aside by the previous question.

In the first moments of vexation and disappointment, General Sullivan had addressed some letters to the governor of Rhode Island, complaining bitterly of being abandoned by the fleet. These despatches were transmitted by the governor to the speaker of the assembly, and were on the point of being submitted publicly to the house, when they were fortunately arrested by General Greene, who had been introduced on the floor, and placed by the side of the chair; and to whom they were shown by the speaker.

The discontent in New England generally, and in Boston particularly, was so great as to inspire fears that the means of repairing the French ships would not be supplied. To guard against the mischief which might result from this temper, as well as for other objects, General Hancock had repaired from camp to Boston, and Lafayette had followed him on a visit to D'Estaing.

The consequences to be apprehended from this unavailing manifestation of ill temper, soon induced all reflecting men to exert themselves to control it. In the commencement of its operation, General Washington, foreseeing the evils with which it was fraught, had laboured to prevent them. He addressed letters to General Sullivan, to General Heath, who commanded at Boston, and to other individuals of influence in New England, urging the necessity of correcting the intemperance of the moment, and of guarding against the interference of passion with the public interest.

Soon after the transmission of these letters, he received a resolution of congress, directing him to take every measure in his power to prevent the publication of the protest entered into by the officers of Sullivan's army. In his letter, communicating this resolution, he said, "the disagreement between the army under your command and the fleet, has given me very singular uneasiness. The continent at large is concerned in our cordiality, and it should be kept up by all possible means, consistent with our honour and policy. First impressions, you know, are generally longest retained, and will serve to fix, in a great degree, our national character with the French. In our conduct towards them, we should remember that they are a people old in war, very strict in military etiquette, and apt to take fire when others scarcely seem warm. Permit me to recommend in the most particular manner, the cultivation of harmony and good agreement, and your endeavours to destroy that ill humour which may have found its way among the officers. It is of the utmost importance too, that the soldiers and the people should know nothing of this misunderstanding, or, if it has reached them, that means may be used to stop its progress, and prevent its effects." In a letter to General Greene, after expressing his fears that the seeds of dissension and distrust, might be sown between the troops of the two nations, he added, "I depend much on your temper and influence, to conciliate that animosity which, I plainly perceive by a letter from the Marquis, subsists between the American and French officers in our service. This, you may be assured, will extend itself to the Count, and to the officers and men of his whole fleet, should they return to Rhode Island, unless a reconciliation shall have taken place. The Marquis speaks kindly of a letter from you to him on this subject. He will therefore take any advice from you in a friendly way; and, if he can be pacified, the other French gentleman will, of course, be satisfied; since they look up to him as their head. The Marquis grounds his complaint on a general order of the 24th of August, and upon the universal clamour that prevailed against the French nation.

"I beg you will take every measure to keep the protest entered into by the general officers from being made public. Congress, sensible of the ill consequences that will flow from our differences being known to the world, have passed a resolve to that purpose. Upon the whole, my dear sir, you can conceive my meaning,[1] better than I can express it, and I therefore fully depend on your exerting yourself to heal all private animosities between our principal officers and the French, and to prevent all illiberal expressions and reflections that may fall from the army at large."

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[1] Alluding, it is presumed, to the delicacy of suggesting to General Sullivan the mischief to be apprehended from any intemperate expressions.

The general also seized the first opportunity to recommence his correspondence with the Count; and his letters, without noticing the disagreement which had taken place, were calculated to sooth every angry sensation which might have been excited. A letter from the Admiral stating the whole transaction, was answered by General Washington in a manner so perfectly satisfactory, that the irritation which threatened such serious mischief, appears to have entirely subsided.

Congress also, in a resolution which was made public, expressed their perfect approbation of the conduct of the Count, and directed the president to assure him, in the letter which should transmit it, that they entertained the highest sense of his zeal and attachment.

These prudent and temperate measures restored harmony to the allied armies.

The storm under which the French fleet had suffered so severely, did considerable damage also to that of Lord Howe. The British, however, had sustained less injury than the French, and were soon in a condition to put again to sea. Having received information that the Count D'Estaing had made for Boston, Lord Howe sailed for the same port, in the hope of reaching it before him. But in this he was disappointed. On entering the bay he found the French fleet already in Nantasket Road, where such judicious dispositions had been made for its defence, that he relinquished the idea of attacking it, and returned to New York; where he resigned the command to Admiral Gambier, who was to retain it till the arrival of Admiral Byron.

Finding that General Sullivan had retreated to the continent, Sir Henry Clinton returned to New York, leaving the command of the troops on board the transports with Major General Gray, who was directed to conduct an expedition to the eastward, as far as Buzzards bay.

Gray entered Acushnet river, where he destroyed a number of privateers with their prizes, and some merchant vessels. Sept. 5. He also reduced part of the towns of Bedford and Fairhaven to ashes, in which some military and naval stores had been collected. The troops re-embarked the next day, before the militia could be assembled in sufficient force to oppose them, and sailed to Martha's Vineyard, where they destroyed several vessels, and some salt works, and levied a heavy contribution of live stock on the inhabitants.

While so large a detachment from the British army was depredating the coasts of New England, preparations were making in New York for some distant expedition; and many were of opinion that the French fleet was its object. To be in readiness to oppose a combined attack by sea and land on the fleet, General Gates was directed with three brigades, to proceed by easy marches as far as Danbury, in Connecticut. And Washington moved northward to Fredericksburg; while General Putnam was detached with two brigades to the neighbourhood of West Point, and General M'Dougal, with two others, to join General Gates at Danbury.

Soon after the return of General Gray from New England, Sept. 22. the British army moved up the North River on each side in great force. The column on the west side, commanded by Lord Cornwallis, consisting of about five thousand men, took a position with its right on the river, and its left extending to Newbridge, on the Hackensack, while the other division, which was commanded by General Knyphausen, consisting of about three thousand men, was advanced about the same distance on the east side of the Hudson. The command of the river enabled these two columns to communicate freely with each other; and, at any time, to reunite. Although General Washington conjectured that this movement was made for the purpose of foraging, yet it was possible that the passes in the Highlands might be its object; and orders were given to the detachments on the lines to hold themselves in readiness to anticipate the execution of such a design.

Colonel Baylor, with his regiment of cavalry, had crossed the Hackensack early in the morning of the 27th of September, and taken quarters at Taupaun, or Herringtown, a small village near New Taupaun, where some militia were posted. Immediate notice of his position was given to Lord Cornwallis, who formed a plan to surprise and cut off both the cavalry and militia. The party designed to act against Colonel Baylor was commanded by General Gray, and that against the militia, by Lieutenant Colonel Campbell.

That part of the plan which was to be executed by Campbell was defeated by delays in passing the river, during which a deserter gave notice of his approach, and the militia saved themselves by flight. Sept. 28. But the corps commanded by General Gray, guided by some of the country people, eluded the patrols, got into the rear of the sergeant's guard which had been posted at a bridge over the Hackensack, cut it off without alarming Baylor, and completely surprised his whole regiment. The British troops rushed into a barn where the Americans slept; and, refusing to give quarter, bayoneted for a time all they saw. Of one hundred and four privates, sixty-seven were killed, wounded, and taken. The number of prisoners, amounting to about forty, is stated to have been increased by the humanity of one of Gray's captains, who, notwithstanding his orders, gave quarter to the whole of the fourth troop. Colonel Baylor and Major Clough, who were both wounded with the bayonet, the first dangerously, the last mortally, were among the prisoners.

Three days after this affair, Colonel Richard Butler, with a detachment of infantry, assisted by Major Lee with a part of his cavalry, fell in with a small party of chasseurs and yagers under Captain Donop, which he instantly charged, and, without the loss of a man, killed ten on the spot, and took the officer commanding the chasseurs, and eighteen of the yagers, prisoners. Only the extreme roughness of the country, which impeded the action of the cavalry, and prevented part of the infantry from coming up, enabled a man of the enemy to escape. Some interest was taken at the time in this small affair, because it seemed, in some measure, to revenge the loss of Colonel Baylor.

After completing their forage, the British army returned to New York.

This movement had been, in part, designed to cover an expedition against Little Egg Harbour, which was completely successful; and the works and store-houses at the place, as well as the merchandise and vessels, were entirely destroyed.

It has been already stated that Count Pulaski had been appointed general of the American cavalry. The dissatisfaction given by this appointment to the officers, had induced him to resign his commission, but, thirsting for military fame, and zealous in the American cause, he obtained permission to raise a legionary corps, which he officered chiefly with foreigners, and commanded in person. In this corps, one Juliet, a deserter, had been admitted as an officer. The Count had been ordered to march from Trenton towards Little Egg Harbour, and was lying eight or ten miles from the coast, when this Juliet again deserted, carrying with him intelligence of Pulaski's strength and situation. A plan was formed to surprise him, which succeeded completely so far as respected his infantry, who were put to the bayonet. The British accounts of this expedition assert that the whole corps was destroyed. Pulaski stated his loss at about forty; and averred that on coming up with his cavalry to the relief of his infantry, he repulsed the enemy. It is probable that the one account diminishes the importance of this enterprise as much as the other magnifies it.

Admiral Byron reached New York, and took command of the fleet about the middle of September. After repairing his shattered vessels, he sailed for the port of Boston. Soon after his arrival in the bay, fortune disconcerted all his plans. A furious storm drove him out to sea, and damaged his fleet so much that he found it necessary to put into the port of Rhode Island to refit. This favourable moment was seized by the Count D'Estaing, who sailed, on the 3d of November, for the West Indies.

Thus terminated an expedition from which the most important advantages had been anticipated. A variety of accidents had defeated plans judiciously formed, which had every probability in their favour.

The Marquis de Lafayette, ambitious of fame on another theatre, was desirous of returning to France. Expecting war on the continent of Europe, he was anxious to tender his services to his king, and to his native country.

From motives of real friendship as well as of policy, General Washington was desirous of preserving the connexion of this officer with the army, and of strengthening his attachment to

America. He therefore expressed to congress his wish that Lafayette, instead of resigning his commission, might have unlimited leave of absence, to return when it should be convenient to himself; and might carry with him every mark of the confidence of the government.

This policy was adopted by congress in its full extent. The partiality of America for Lafayette was well placed. Never did a foreigner, whose primary attachments to his own country remained undiminished, feel more solicitude for the welfare of another, than was unceasingly manifested by this young nobleman, for the United States.

There being no prospect of an active winter campaign in the northern or middle states, and the climate admitting of military operations elsewhere, a detachment from the British army, consisting of five thousand men commanded by Major General Grant, sailed, early in November, under a strong convoy, for the West India Islands; and, towards the end of the same month, another embarkation was made for the southern parts of the continent. This second detachment was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Campbell, who was escorted by Commodore Hyde Parker, and was destined to act against the southern states.

December.

As a force sufficient for the defence of New York yet remained, the American army retired into winter quarters. The main body was cantoned in Connecticut, on both sides the North River, about West Point, and at Middlebrook. Light troops were stationed nearer the lines; and the cavalry were drawn into the interior to recruit the horses for the next campaign. In this distribution, the protection of the country, the security of important points, and a cheap and convenient supply of provisions, were consulted.

The troops again wintered in huts; but they were accustomed to this mode of passing that inclement season. Though far from being well clothed, their condition in that respect was so much improved by supplies from France, that they disregarded the inconveniences to which they were exposed.

CHAPTER XIV

1778. ABOUT the time that Commodore Parker sailed for the southern states, the commissioners appointed to give effect to the late conciliatory acts of Parliament, embarked for Europe. They had exerted their utmost powers to effect the object of their mission, but without success. Great Britain required that the force of the two nations should be united under one common sovereign; and America was no longer disposed, or even at liberty to accede to this condition. All those affections, which parts of the same empire should feel for each other, had been eradicated by a distressing war; the great body of the people were determined, at every sacrifice, to maintain their independence; and the treaty with France had pledged the honour and the faith of the nation, never to consent to a reunion with the British empire.

The commissioners arrived in Philadelphia while that place was yet in possession of their army, and are understood to have brought positive orders for its evacuation. Their arrival was immediately announced to General Washington by Sir Henry Clinton, who was joined with them in the commission, and a passport was requested for their secretary, Doctor Ferguson, as the bearer of their first despatches to congress. The Commander-in-chief declined granting this passport until he should receive the instructions of his government; on which a letter addressed "To the president and other the members of congress," was forwarded in the usual manner. Copies of their commission, and of the acts of Parliament on which it was founded, together with propositions conforming to those acts, drawn in the most conciliatory language, were transmitted with this letter.

Some observations having been introduced into it reflecting on the conduct of France,[1] the reading was interrupted, and a motion made to proceed no farther in consequence of this offensive language to his most Christian Majesty. This motion producing some debate, and adjournment was moved and carried. When congress reassembled, the warmth of the preceding day had not entirely subsided; but, after several ineffectual motions to prevent it, the letter was read and committed. The answer which was reported by the committee, and transmitted to the commissioners, declared that "nothing but an earnest desire to spare the farther effusion of human blood, could have induced them to read a paper containing expressions so disrespectful to his most Christian Majesty, the good and great ally of these states, or to consider propositions so derogatory to the honour of an independent nation.

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[1] The offensive words were "insidious interposition of a power which has, from the first settlement of the colonies, been actuated with enmity to us both; and notwithstanding the pretended date or present form of the French offers."

"That the acts of the British Parliament, the commission from their sovereign, and their letter, supposed the people of the United States to be subjects of the crown of Great Britain, and were founded on the idea of dependence, which is totally inadmissible.

"That congress was inclined to peace, notwithstanding the unjust claims from which this was originated, and the savage manner in which it was conducted. They would therefore be ready to enter upon the consideration of a treaty of peace and commerce, not inconsistent with treaties already subsisting, when the King of Great Britain should demonstrate a sincere disposition for that purpose. The only solid proof of this disposition would be an explicit acknowledgment of the independence of these states, or the withdrawing his fleets and armies."

On the 13th of July, after arriving at New York, the commissioners addressed a second letter to congress, expressing their regrets that any difficulties were raised which must prolong the calamities of war; and reviewing the letter of congress in terms well calculated to make an impression on those who had become weary of the contest, and to revive ancient prejudices in favour of England and against France.

This letter being read, congress resolved that, as neither the independence of the United States was explicitly acknowledged, nor the fleets and armies withdrawn, no answer should be given to it.

It would seem that the first letter of congress must have convinced the British commissioners that no hope could be indulged of restoring peace on any other terms than the independence of the United States. Congress must have been equally certain that the commissioners were not empowered to acknowledge that independence, or to direct the fleets and armies of Great Britain to be withdrawn. The intercourse between them therefore, after the first communications were exchanged, and all subsequent measures, became a game of skill, in which the parties played for the affections and passions of the people; and was no longer a diplomatic correspondence, discussing the interests of two great nations with the hope of accommodation.

The first packet addressed by the commissioners to congress, contained several private letters, written by Governor Johnson to members of that body, in which he blended, with flattering expressions of respect for their characters and their conduct, assurances of the honours and emoluments to which those would be entitled who should contribute to restore peace and harmony to the two countries and to terminate the present war.

A few days before the receipt of the letter of the 13th of July, congress passed a resolution requiring that all letters of a public nature received by any member from any subject of the British crown, should be laid before them. In compliance with this resolution, the letters of Governor Johnson were produced; and, some time afterwards, Mr. Read stated, in his place, a direct offer which had been made him by a third person, of a considerable sum of money, and of any office in the gift of the crown, as an inducement to use his influence for the restoration of harmony between the two countries. Congress determined to communicate these circumstances to the American people, and made a solemn declaration, in which, after reciting the offensive paragraphs of the private letters, and the conversation stated by Mr. Read, they expressed their opinion "that these were direct attempts to corrupt and bribe the congress of the United States, and that it was incompatible with their honour to hold any manner of correspondence or intercourse with the said George Johnson, Esquire, especially to negotiate with him upon affairs in which the cause of liberty is interested." After an unsuccessful attempt to involve the other commissioners in the same exclusion.

this declaration was transmitted to them while they were expecting an answer to a remonstrance on the detention of the army of General Burgoyne.

On receiving it, Mr. Johnson withdrew from the commission, declaring that he should be happy to find congress inclined to retract their former declaration, and to negotiate with others on terms equally conducive to the happiness of both countries. This declaration was accompanied by one signed by the other commissioners, in which, without admitting the construction put by congress on his letters, or the authority of the person who held the conversation with Mr. Read, they denied all knowledge of those letters or of that conversation. They at the same time detailed the advantages to be derived by America from the propositions they had made, "advantages," they added, "decidedly superior to any which could be expected from an unnatural alliance with France, only entered into by that nation for the purpose of prolonging the war after the full knowledge on their part of the liberal terms intended to be offered by Great Britain." With this declaration was transmitted a copy of the former remonstrance[1] against the detention of the convention troops, without the signature of Governor Johnson, and an extract from the instructions given by the Secretary of State to Sir Henry Clinton, authorising him to demand, in express terms, a performance of the convention made with General Burgoyne, and, if required, to renew and ratify all its conditions in the name of the king.

All the publications of the British commissioners indicate an opinion that they could be more successful with the people than with congress; and, not unfrequently betray the desire that the constituents of that body might be enabled to decide on the measures taken by their representatives.

On the part of congress, it was deemed of the utmost importance to keep the public mind correct, and to defeat all attempts to make unfavourable impressions on it. Several members of that body entered the lists as disputants, and employed their pens with ability and success, as well in serious argument, as in rousing the various passions which influence the conduct of men. The attempt to accomplish the object of the mission by corruption was wielded with great effect; and it was urged with equal force that should the United States now break their faith with France, and treat on the footing of dependence, they would sacrifice all credit with foreign nations, would be considered by all as faithless and infamous, and would forfeit all pretensions to future aid from abroad; after which the terms now offered might be retracted, and the war be recommenced. To these representations were added the certainty of independence, and the great advantages which must result from its establishment. The letters of the commissioners were treated as attempts to sow divisions among the people of which they might afterwards avail themselves, and thus effect by intrigue, what had been found unattainable by arms.

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[1] Some expressions having been used in the letter, respecting the convention troops, which were deemed disrespectful, no other reply was made to it than that "congress gave no answer to insolent letters."

These essays were read with avidity, and seem to have produced all the effect which was expected from them among the friends of the revolution.

The commissioners appear still to have cherished the hope, that a complete knowledge of the terms they had offered, operating on the disappointment of the extravagant hopes which had been founded on the arrival of a French fleet, would make a great impression on a large portion of the American people. This opinion induced them, before their departure, to publish a manifesto, addressed, not only to congress, but to all the provincial assemblies, and all the inhabitants of the colonies of whatever denomination, briefly recapitulating the several steps they had taken to accomplish the object of their mission, and the refusal of congress even to open a conference with them. They declared their readiness still to proceed in the execution of the powers contained in their commission, and to treat either with deputies from all the colonies conjointly, or with any provincial assembly or convention individually, at any time within the space of forty days from the date of their manifesto. They also proclaimed a general pardon for all treasons and rebellious practices committed at any time previous to the date of their manifesto, to such as should, within the term of forty days, withdraw from their opposition to the British government, and conduct themselves as faithful and loyal subjects. To enable all persons to avail themselves of this proffered pardon, thirteen copies of the manifesto were executed, one of which was transmitted by a flag of truce to each state. A vast number of copies were printed, and great exertions were made by flags and other means to disperse them among the people.

On being informed of these proceedings, congress, without hesitation, adopted the course which the government of an independent nation is bound to pursue, when attempts are made by a foreign power to open negotiations with unauthorised individuals. They declared the measure "to be contrary to the law of nations, and utterly subversive of that confidence which could alone maintain those means which had been invented to alleviate the horrors of war; and, therefore, that the persons employed to distribute such papers, were not entitled to the protection of a flag." They recommended it to the executive departments in the respective states, "to secure, in close custody, every person who, under the sanction of a flag, or otherwise, was found employed in circulating those manifestoes." At the same time, to show that these measures were not taken for the purpose of concealment, they directed a publication of the manifesto in the American papers. Care, however, was taken to accompany it with comments made by individuals, calculated to counteract its effect. A vessel containing a cargo of these papers being wrecked on the coast, the officers and crew were made prisoners; and the requisition of Admiral Gambier for their release, in consequence of the privilege afforded by his flag, was answered by a declaration that they had forfeited that privilege by being charged with seditious papers.

Not long after the publication of this paper, a counter manifesto was issued by congress, in which, after touching on subjects which might influence the public mind, they "solemnly declare and proclaim, that if their enemies presume to execute their threats, or persist in their present course of barbarity, they will take such exemplary vengeance as shall deter others from a like conduct."

Thus ended this fruitless attempt to restore a connexion which had been wantonly broken, the reinstatement of which had become impracticable. With the war, and with independence, a course of opinion had prevailed in America, which not only opposed great obstacles to a reunion of the two countries under one common sovereign, but, by substituting discordant materials in the place of the cement which formerly bound them together, rendered such an event undesirable even to the British themselves. The time was arrived when the true interest of that nation required the relinquishment of an expensive war, the object of which was unattainable, and which, if attained, could not be long preserved; and the establishment of those amicable relations which reciprocal interest produce between independent states, capable of being serviceable to each other by a fair and equal interchange of good offices.

This opinion, however, was not yet embraced by the cabinet of London; and great exertions were still to be made for the reannexation of the American states to the British empire. Even the opposition was not united against a continuance of the war for the object now proposed; and the Earl of Chatham, who had endeavoured first to prevent the conflict, and afterwards to produce conciliation, closed his splendid life in unavailing efforts to prevent that dismemberment which had become inevitable.[1]

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[1] The author has been favoured by his estimable friend, Major General Scott, with the perusal of an introduction written by Mr. L. De Sevelinges, to Botta's "History of the war of the independence of the United States of America," translated into French.

Mr. De Sevelinges professes to have received the most precious explanations, relative to incidents and motives, from a gentleman equally distinguished for his knowledge and his character, whose situation enabled him to become acquainted with facts which were concealed from the public. Speaking of the attempt made by Mr. Johnstone, he says, p. 19, it was essential "to break off all communication with the agents of the British minister. Mr. Girard directed all his efforts to this object, and had the good fortune to effect it.

But the English faction of tories subsisted. It was powerful from the credit of its chiefs."

In a note on this passage, he says, "The most influential were Samuel Adams and Richard Lee, (Richard H. Lee,) the brother of Arthur Lee, one of the deputies of congress in France. He was convicted of having secret intelligence with the British minister."

It would be injustice to the memoirs of these distinguished patriots to attempt their vindication against this atrocious and unfounded calumny. A calumny supported by no testimony, nor by a single circumstance wearing even the semblance of probability, and confuted by the whole tenour of their lives. The annals of the American revolution do not furnish two names more entirely above suspicion than Samuel Adams and Richard Henry Lee. With the first gentleman the author was not personally acquainted. With the last he was; and can appeal with confidence to every man who knew him, to declare the conviction, that he died as he lived, a pure and devoted, as well as enlightened friend of American independence. The same character was maintained by Mr. Adams.

In casting about for the foundation of this calumny, the author is inclined to

In the midst of these transactions with the commissioners of Great Britain, the Sieur Girard arrived at Philadelphia, in the character of Minister Plenipotentiary of his Most Christian Majesty. July 14.

The joy produced by this event was unbounded; and he was received by congress with great pomp.

While these diplomatic concerns employed the American cabinet, and while the war seemed to languish on the Atlantic, it raged to the west in its most savage form.

The difficulties which the inability of the American government to furnish the neighbouring Indians with those European articles which they were accustomed to use, opposed to all the efforts of congress to preserve their friendship, have already been noticed. Early in 1778, there were many indications of a general disposition among those savages to make war on the United States; and the frontiers, from the Mohawk to the Ohio, were threatened with the tomahawk and the scalping knife. Every representation from that country supported the opinion that a war with the Indians should never be defensive; and that, to obtain peace, it must be carried into their own country. Detroit, whose governor was believed to have been particularly active in exciting hostilities, was understood to be in a defenceless condition; and congress resolved on an expedition against that place. This enterprise was entrusted to General M'Intosh, who commanded at Pittsburg, and was to be carried on with three thousand men, chiefly militia, to be drawn from Virginia. To facilitate its success, the resolution was also taken to enter the country of the Senecas at the same time, by the way of the

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look for it in the opinions entertained by these gentlemen, on subjects connected with the negotiations for peace.

Since the publication of the secret journals of congress, it is generally known that France countenanced the claim of Spain to circumscribe the western boundary of the United States, by the line prescribed in the royal proclamation of 1763, for settlement of vacant lands. After Great Britain had consented to acknowledge the independence of the United States, it was understood by those who were acquainted with the views of the belligerents, that a disposition existed on the part of France and Spain, to continue the war for objects in which the United States felt no interest,—among others, for Gibraltar and Jamaica. Some American statesmen, and the Lees were of the number, probably Mr. Adams also, were extremely apprehensive that the miseries of their country would be prolonged for these objects. It is not impossible that the sentiments of these gentlemen on these subjects, being in opposition to the views of France, might, though founded entirely in American policy, be attributed to British intrigues.

Mohawk. The officer commanding on the east of the Hudson was desired to take measures for carrying this resolution into execution; and the commissioners for Indian affairs, at Albany, were directed to co-operate with him.

Unfortunately, the acts of the government did not correspond with the vigour of its resolutions. The necessary preparations were not made, and the inhabitants of the frontiers remained without sufficient protection, until the plans against them were matured, and the storm which had been long gathering, burst upon them with a fury which spread desolation wherever it reached.

About three hundred white men, commanded by Colonel John Butler, and about five hundred Indians, led by the Indian chief Brandt, who had assembled in the north, marched late in June against the settlement of Wyoming. These troops embarked on the Chemung or Tyoga, and descending the Susquehanna, landed at a place called the Three Islands, whence they marched about twenty miles, and crossing a wilderness, and passing through a gap in the mountain, entered the valley of Wyoming near its northern boundary. At this place a small fort called Wintermoots had been erected, which fell into their hands without resistance, and was burnt. The inhabitants who were capable of bearing arms assembled on the first alarm at Forty fort, on the west side of the Susquehanna, four miles below the camp of the invading army.

The regular troops, amounting to about sixty, were commanded by Colonel Zebulon Butler;[1] the militia by Colonel Dennison. Colonel Butler was desirous of awaiting the arrival of a small reinforcement under Captain Spalding, who had been ordered by General Washington to his aid on the first intelligence of the danger which threatened the settlement; but the militia generally, believing themselves sufficiently strong to repel the invading force, urged an immediate battle so earnestly, that Colonel Butler yielded to their remonstrances, and on the 3d of July marched from Forty fort at the head of near four hundred men to attack the enemy.

The British and Indians were prepared to receive him. Their line was formed a small distance in front of their camp, in a plain thinly covered with pine, shrub oaks, and under growth, and extended from the river about a mile to a marsh at the foot of the mountain. The Americans advanced in a single column, without interruption, until they approached the enemy, when they received a fire which did not much mischief. The line of battle[1] was instantly formed, and the action commenced with

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[1] This gentleman is stated not to have been of the same family with the leader of the invading army.

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[1] The representation of this battle, and of the circumstances attending the destruction of the Wyoming settlement, have been materially varied from the statement made of them in the first edition. The papers of General Washington furnished allusions to the transaction, but no particular account of it. The author therefore relied on Mr. Gordon and Mr. Ramsay, whose authority was quoted. Soon after the work was published, he received a letter from a gentleman then residing in that country, (Mr. Charles Miner,) who asserted with confidence that the statement was incorrect, and gave himself a minute detail of events, collected from persons who were in the settlement at the time, and witnessed them.

The author has been since indebted to the same gentleman for a statement of the battle, and of the events which followed it, drawn up by one of the descendants of Colonel Zebulon Butler, to which the certificates of several gentlemen are annexed, who were engaged in the action. These documents, with one which will be mentioned, convince him that the combined treachery and savage ferocity which have been painted in such vivid colours, in the narratives that have been given of this furious and desolating irruption, have been greatly exaggerated. Historic truth demands that these misstatements should be corrected.

The other document alluded to, is a letter from Zebulon Butler to the board of war, making his report of the transaction. The letter has been lately found among his papers, and is copied below.

Grandenhutten, Penn Township, July 10th, 1778.

Honoured Sir,—On my arrival at Westmoreland, (which was only four days after I left Yorktown,) I found there was a large body of the enemy advancing on that settlement. On the first of July we mustered the militia, and marched towards them by the river above the settlement,—found and killed two Indians at a place where the day before they had murdered nine men engaged in hoeing corn. We found some canoes, &c. but finding we were above their main body, it was judged prudent to return. And as every man had to go to his own house for his provision, we could not muster again till the 3d of July. In the mean time, the enemy had got possession of two forts, one of which we had reason to believe was designed for them, though they burnt them both. The inhabitants had seven forts for the security of their women and children, extending about ten miles on the river, and too many men would stay in them to take care of them; but after collecting about three hundred of the most spirited of them, including Captain Hewitt's company, I held a council with the officers, who were all agreed that it was best to attack the enemy before they got any farther. We accordingly marched,—found their situation,—formed a front of the same extension of the enemy's, and attacked from right to left at the same time. Our men stood the fire well for three or four shots, till some part of the enemy gave way; but unfortunately for us, through some mistake, the word *retreat* was understood from some officer on the left, which took so quick that it was not in the power of the officers to form them again, though I believe, if they had stood three minutes longer, the enemy would have been beaten. The utmost pains were taken by the officers, who mostly fell. A lieutenant colonel, a major and five captains, who were in commission in the militia, all fell. Colonel Durkee, and Captains Hewitt and Ransom were likewise killed. In the whole, about two hundred men lost their lives in the action on our side. What number of the enemy were killed is yet uncertain, though I believe a very consider-spirit. The Americans rather gained ground on the right where Colonel Butler commanded, until a large body of Indians passing through the skirt of the marsh turned their left flank, which was composed of militia, and poured a heavy and most destructive fire on their rear. The word "retreat" was pronounced by some person, and the efforts of the officers to check it were unavailing. The fate of the day was decided, and a flight commenced on the left which was soon followed by the right. As soon as the line was broken, the Indians, throwing down their rifles and rushing upon them with the tomahawk completed the confusion. The attempt of Colonel Butler and of the officers to restore order were unavailing, and the whole line broke and fled in confusion. The massacre was general, and the cries for mercy were answered by the tomahawk. Rather less than sixty men escaped, some to Forty fort, some by swimming the river, and some to the mountain. A very few prisoners were made, only three of whom were preserved alive, who were carried to Niagara.

Further resistance was impracticable. Colonel Dennison pro-

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able number. The loss of these men so intimidated the inhabitants, that they gave up the matter of fighting. Great numbers ran off, and others would comply with the terms that I had refused. The enemy sent flags frequently—the terms you will see in the enclosed letter. They repeatedly said they had nothing to do with any but the inhabitants, and did not want to treat with me. Colonel Dennison, by desire of the inhabitants, went and complied,—which made it necessary for me and the little remains of Captain Hewitt's company to leave the place. Indeed it was determined by the enemy to spare the inhabitants after their agreement, and that myself and the few continental soldiers should be delivered up to the savages. Upon which I left the place, and came scarcely able to move, as I have had no rest since I left Yorktown. It has not been in my power to find a horse or man to wait on the board till now. I must submit to the board what must be the next step. The little remains of Hewitt's company (which are about fifteen) are gone to Shamoken, and Captain Spalding's company, I have heard, are on the Delaware. Several hundred of the inhabitants are strolling in the country destitute of provisions, who have large fields of grain and other necessaries of life at Westmoreland. In short, if the inhabitants can go back, there may yet be saved double the quantity of provisions to support themselves, otherwise they must be beggars, and a burthen to the world.

I have heard from men that came from the place since the people gave up, that the Indians have killed no person since, but have burnt most of the buildings, and are collecting all the horses they can, and are moving up the river. They likewise say the enemy were eight hundred, one-half white men. I should be glad that, if possible, there might be a sufficient guard sent for the defence of the place, which will be the means of saving thousands from poverty—but must submit to the wisdom of congress. I desire farther orders from the honourable board of war with respect to myself, and the soldiers under my direction.

I have the honour to be
Your Honour's most obedient humble servant,
Zebulon Butler.

posed terms of capitulation, which were granted to the inhabitants. It being understood that no quarter would be allowed to the continental troops, Colonel Butler with his few surviving soldiers fled from the valley.

The inhabitants generally abandoned the country, and, in great distress, wandered into the settlements on the Lehigh and the Delaware. The Indians, as is the practice of savages, destroyed the houses and improvements by fire, and plundered the country. After laying waste the whole settlement, they withdrew from it before the arrival of the continental troops, who were detached to meet them.

To cover every part of the United States would have required a much greater number of men than could be raised. Different districts were therefore unavoidably exposed to the calamities ever to be experienced by those into the bosom of whose country war is carried. The militia in every part of the Union, fatigued and worn out by repeated tours of duty, required to be relieved by continental troops. Their applications were necessarily resisted; but the danger which threatened the western frontier had become so imminent; the appeal made by its sufferings to national feeling was so affecting, that it was determined to spare a more considerable portion of the army for its defence, than had been allotted to that part of the Union, since the capture of Burgoyne. On the first intelligence of the destruction of Wyoming, the regiments of Hartley and Butler, with the remnant of Morgan's corps, commanded by Major Posey, were detached to the protection of that distressed country. They were engaged in several sharp skirmishes, made separate incursions into the Indian settlements, broke up their nearest villages, destroyed their corn, and by compelling them to retire to a greater distance, gave some relief to the inhabitants.

While the frontiers of New York and Pennsylvania were thus suffering the calamities incident to savage warfare, a fate equally severe was preparing for Virginia. The western militia of that state had made some successful incursions into the country north-west of the Ohio, and had taken some British posts on the Mississippi. These were erected into the county of Illinois; and a regiment of infantry, with a troop of cavalry, were raised for its protection. The command of these troops was given to

Colonel George Rogers Clarke, a gentleman whose courage, hardihood, and capacity for Indian warfare, had given repeated success to his enterprises against the savages.

This corps was divided into several detachments, the strongest of which remained with Colonel Clarke at Kaskaskia. Colonel Hamilton, the Governor of Detroit, was at Vincennes with about six hundred men, principally Indians, preparing an expedition, first against Kaskaskia, and then up the Ohio to Pittsburg; after which he purposed to desolate the frontiers of Virginia. Clarke anticipated and defeated his design by one of those bold and decisive measures, which, whether formed on a great or a small scale, mark the military and enterprising genius of the man who plans and executes them.

1779. He was too far removed from the inhabited country to hope for support, and was too weak to maintain Kaskaskia and the Illinois against the combined force of regulars and Indians by which he was to be attacked so soon as the season for action should arrive. While employed in preparing for his defence, he received unquestionable information that Hamilton had detached his Indians on an expedition against the frontiers, reserving at the post he occupied only about eighty regulars, with three pieces of cannon and some swivels. February. Clarke instantly resolved to seize this favourable moment. After detaching a small galley up the Wabash with orders to take her station a few miles below Vincennes, and to permit nothing to pass her, he marched in the depth of winter with one hundred and thirty men, the whole force he could collect, across the country from Kaskaskia to Vincennes. This march, through the woods, and over high waters, required sixteen days, five of which were employed in crossing the drowned lands of the Wabash. The troops were under the necessity of wading five miles in water, frequently up to their breasts. After subduing these difficulties, this small party appeared before the town, which was completely surprised, and readily consented to change its master. Hamilton, after defending the fort a short time, surrendered himself and his garrison prisoners of war. With a few of his immediate agents and counsellors, who had been instrumental in the savage barbarities he had encouraged, he was, by order of the executive of Virginia, put in irons, and confined in a jail.

This expedition was important in its consequences. It disconcerted a plan which threatened destruction to the whole country west of the Alleghany mountains; detached from the British interest many of those numerous tribes of Indians south of the waters immediately communicating with the great lakes; and had, most probably, considerable influence in fixing the western boundary of the United States.

1778.

We have already seen that congress, actuated by their wishes rather than governed by a temperate calculation of the means in their possession, had, in the preceding winter, planned a second invasion of Canada, to be conducted by the Marquis de Lafayette; and that, as the generals only were got in readiness for this expedition, was necessarily laid aside. The design, however, seems to have been suspended, not abandoned. The alliance with France revived the latent wish to annex that extensive territory to the United States. That favourite subject was resumed; and, towards autumn, a plan was completely digested for a combined attack to be made by the allies on all the British dominions on the continent, and on the adjacent islands of Cape Breton and Newfoundland. This plan was matured about the time the Marquis de Lafayette obtained leave to return to his own country, and was ordered to be transmitted by that nobleman to Doctor Franklin, the minister of the United States at the court of Versailles, with instructions to induce, if possible, the French cabinet to accede to it. Some communications respecting this subject were also made to the Marquis, on whose influence in securing its adoption by his own government, much reliance was placed; and, in October, 1778, it was, for the first time, transmitted to General Washington, with a request that he would inclose it by the Marquis, with his observations on it, to Doctor Franklin.

This very extensive plan of military operations for the ensuing campaign, prepared entirely in the cabinet, without consulting, so far as is known, a single military man, consisted of many parts.

Two detachments, amounting, each, to sixteen hundred men, were to march from Pittsburg and Wyoming against Detroit, and Niagara.

A third body of troops, which was to be stationed on the Mohawk during the winter, and to be powerfully reinforced in the spring, was to seize Oswego, and to secure the navigation of Lake Ontario with vessels to be constructed of materials to be procured in the winter.

A fourth corps was to penetrate into Canada by the St. Francis, and to reduce Montreal, and the posts on Lake Champlain, while a fifth should guard against troops from Quebec.

Thus far America could proceed unaided by her ally. But, Upper Canada being reduced, another campaign would still be necessary for the reduction of Quebec. This circumstance would require that the army should pass the winter in Canada; and, in the mean time. the garrison of Quebec might be largely reinforced. It was therefore essential to the complete success of the enterprise, that France should be induced to take a part in it.

The conquest of Quebec, and of Halifax, was supposed to be an object of so much importance to France as well as to the United States, that her aid might be confidently expected.

It was proposed to request his most Christian Majesty to furnish four or five thousand troops, to sail from Brest, the beginning of May, under convoy of four ships of the line and four frigates; the troops to be clad as if for service in the West Indies, and thick clothes to be sent after them in August. A large American detachment was to act with this French army; and it was supposed that Quebec and Halifax might be reduced by the beginning or middle of October. The army might then either proceed immediately against Newfoundland, or remain in garrison until the spring, when the conquest of that place might be accomplished.

It had been supposed probable that England would abandon the farther prosecution of the war on the continent of North America, in which case the government would have a respectable force at its disposal, the advantageous employment of which had engaged in part the attention of the Commander-in-chief. He had contemplated an expedition against the British posts in Upper Canada as a measure which might be eventually eligible, and which might employ the arms of the United States to advantage, if their troops might safely be withdrawn from the sea board. He had however considered every object of this sort as contingent. Having estimated the difficulties to be encountered in such an enterprise, he had found them so considerable as to hesitate on the extent which might safely be given to the expedition, admitting the United States to be evacuated by the British armies.

In this state of mind, he received the magnificent plan already prepared by congress. He was forcibly struck with the impracticability of executing that part of it which was to be undertaken by the United States, should the British armies continue in their country; and with the serious mischief which would result to the common cause, as well from diverting so considerable a part of the French force from other objects to one which was, in his opinion, so unpromising, as from the ill impression which would be made on the court and nation by the total failure of the American government to execute its part of a plan originating with itself; a failure which would, most probably, sacrifice the troops and ships employed by France.

On comparing the naval force of England with that of France in the different parts of the world, the former appeared to him to maintain a decided superiority; and consequently to possess the power of shutting up the ships of the latter which might be trusted into the St. Lawrence. To suppose that the British government would not avail itself of this superiority on such an occasion, would be to impute to it a blind infatuation, or ignorance of the plans of its adversary, which could not be safely assumed in calculations of such serious import.

A plan too, consisting of so many parts, to be prosecuted both from Europe and America, by land and by water; which, to be successful, required such a harmonious co-operation of the whole, such a perfect coincidence of events, appeared to him to be exposed to too many accidents, to risk upon it interests of such high value.

In a long and serious letter to congress, he apologised for not obeying their orders to deliver the plan with his observations upon it to the Marquis; and, entering into a full investigation of all its parts, demonstrated the mischiefs, and the dangers, with which it was replete. This letter was referred to a committee, whose report admits the force of the reasons urged by the Commander-in-chief against the expedition, and their own conviction that nothing important could be attempted unless the British armies should be withdrawn from the United States; and that, even in that event, the present plan was far too complex.

Men, however, recede slowly and reluctantly from favourite and flattering projects on which they have long meditated; and the committee, in their report, proceeded to state the opinion that the posts held by the British in the United States would probably be evacuated before the active part of the ensuing campaign; and that, therefore, eventual measures for the expedition ought to be taken.

This report concludes with recommending "that the general should be directed to write to the Marquis de Lafayette on that subject; and also to write to the minister of these states at the court of Versailles very fully, to the end that eventual measures may be taken, in case an armament should be sent from France to Quebec, for co-operating therewith, to the utmost degree, which the finances and resources of these states will admit."

This report also was approved by congress, and transmitted to the Commander-in-chief; who felt himself greatly embarrassed by it. While his objections to the project retained all their force, he found himself required to open a correspondence for the purposes of soliciting the concurrence of France in an expedition he disapproved, and of promising a co-operation he believed to be impracticable. In reply to this communication, he said, "The earnest desire I have strictly to comply in every instance, with the views and instructions of congress, can not but make me feel the greatest uneasiness, when I find myself in circumstances of hesitation or doubt, with respect to their directions. But the perfect confidence I have in the justice and candour of that honourable body, emboldens me to communicate, without reserve, the difficulties which occur in the execution of their present order; and the indulgence I have experienced on every former occasion, induces me to imagine that the liberty I now take will not meet with disapprobation."

After reviewing the report of the committee, and stating his objections to the plan, and the difficulties he felt in performing the duty assigned to him, he added, "But if congress still think it necessary for me to proceed in the business, I must request their more definitive and explicit instructions, and that they will permit me, previous to transmitting the intended despatches, to submit them to their determination.

"I could wish to lay before congress more minutely the state of the army, the condition of our supplies, and the requisites necessary for carrying into execution an undertaking that may involve the most serious events. If congress thinks this can be done more satisfactorily in a personal conference, I hope to have the army in such a situation before I can receive their answer, as to afford me an opportunity of giving my attendance."

Congress acceded to his request of a personal interview; and, on his arrival in Philadelphia, a committee was appointed to confer with him, as well on this particular subject as on the general state of the army and of the country.

The result of these conferences was, that the expedition against Canada was entirely, though reluctantly,[1] given up, and every arrangement recommended by the Commander-in-chief, received the attention to which his judgment and experience gave all his opinions the fairest claim.

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[1] See note No. XV at the end of the volume.

CHAPTER XV

After the relinquishment of that extensive plan of conquest which had been meditated against Canada, no other object seemed to call forth the energies of the nation, 1779. and a general languor appeared to diffuse itself through all the civil departments. The alliance with France was believed to secure independence; and a confidence that Britain could no longer prosecute the war with any hope of success—a confidence encouraged by communications from Europe—prevented those exertions which were practicable, but which it was painful to make. This temper was seen and deplored by the Commander-in-chief, who incessantly combated the opinion that Britain was about to relinquish the contest, and insisted that great and vigorous exertions on the part of the United States was still necessary to bring the war to a successful termination.

It being no longer practicable to engage soldiers by voluntary enlistment, and government not daring to force men into the service for three years, or during the war, the vacant ranks were scantily supplied with drafts for nine, twelve, and eighteen months. A great proportion of the troops were discharged in the course of each year; and, except that the old officers remained, almost a new army was to be formed for every campaign.

Although the Commander-in-chief pressed congress and the state governments continually and urgently, to take timely measures for supplying the places of those who were leaving the service, the means adopted were so slow and ineffectual in their operation, that the season for action never found the preparations completed; and the necessity of struggling against superior numbers was perpetual.

The pleasing delusion that the war was over, to which the public mind delighted to surrender itself, made no impression on the judgment of Washington. Viewing objects through a more correct medium, he perceived that Great Britain had yet much to hope, and America much to fear from a continuance of hostilities. He feared that the impression which the divisions, and apparent inertness of the United States, had made on the British commissioners, would be communicated to their government; and this consideration increased his anxiety in favour of early and vigorous preparations for the next campaign. Yet it was not until the 23d of January that congress passed the resolution, authorizing the Commander-in-chief to re-enlist the army, nor, until the 9th of March that the requisition was made on the several states for their quotas. The bounty offered by the first resolution being found insufficient, the government was again under the necessity of resorting to the states. Thus, at a season when the men ought to have been in camp, the measures for raising them were still to be adopted.

About this period, several circumstances conspired to foment those pernicious divisions and factions in congress, which, in times of greater apparent danger, patriotism would have suppressed.

The ministers of the United States, in Europe, had reciprocally criminated each other, and some of them had been recalled. Their friends in congress supported their respective interests with considerable animation; and, at length, Mr. Deane published a manifesto, in which he arraigned at the bar of the public, the conduct not only of those concerned in foreign negotiations, but of the members of Congress themselves.

The irritation excited by these and other contests, was not a little increased by the appearance, in a New York paper, of an extract from a letter written by Mr. Laurens, the president of congress, to Governor Huiston, of Georgia, which, during the invasion of that state, was found among his papers. In this letter, Mr. Laurens had unbosomed himself with the unsuspecting confidence of a person communicating to a friend the inmost operations of his mind. In a gloomy moment, he had expressed himself with a degree of severity, which even his own opinion, when not under the immediate influence of chagrin, would not entirely justify, and had reflected on the integrity and patriotism of members, without particularising the individuals he deigned to censure.

These altercations added much to the alarm with which General Washington viewed that security which had insinuated itself into the public mind; and his endeavours were unremitting to impress the same apprehensions on those who were supposed capable of removing the delusion. In his confidential letters to gentlemen of the most influence in the several states, he represented in strong terms the dangers which yet threatened the country, and earnestly exhorted them to a continuance of those sacrifices and exertions which he still deemed essential to the happy termination of the war. The dissensions in congress; the removal of individuals of the highest influence and character from the councils of the nation to offices in the respective states; the depreciation of the currency; the destructive spirit of speculation which the imaginary gain produced by this depreciation had diffused throughout the union; a general laxity of principles; and an unwillingness to encounter personal inconvenience for the attainment of the great object, in pursuit of which so much blood and treasure had been expended; were the rocks on which, he apprehended, the state vessel might yet split, and to which he endeavoured, incessantly, to point the attention of those whose weight of political character enabled them to guide the helm.

"I am particularly desirous of a free communication of sentiments with you at this time," says the General in a letter written to a gentleman of splendid political talents, "because I view things very differently, I fear from what people in general do, who seem to think the contest at an end, and that to make money, and get places, are the only things now remaining to be done. I have seen without despondency, even for a moment, the hours which America has styled her gloomy ones; but I have beheld no day since the commencement of hostilities, when I have thought her liberties in such imminent danger as at present. Friends and foes seem now to combine to pull down the goodly fabric we have hitherto been raising at the expense of so much time, blood, and treasure."

After censuring with some freedom the prevailing opinions of the day, he added, "To me it appears no unjust simile to compare the affairs of this great continent to the mechanism of a clock, each state representing some one or other of the smaller parts of it, which they are endeavouring to put in fine order, without considering how useless and unavailing their labour is, unless the great wheel, or spring, which is to set the whole in motion, is also well attended to, and kept in good order. I allude to no particular state, nor do I mean to cast reflections upon any one of them, nor ought I, it may be said, to do so on their representatives; but, as it is a fact too notorious to be concealed, that congress is rent by party; that much business of a trifling nature and personal concernment, withdraws their attention from matters of great national moment at this critical period; when it is also known that idleness and dissipation take place of close attention and application, no man who wishes well to the liberties of this country, and desires to see its rights established, can avoid crying out—where are our men of abilities? Why do they not come forth to save their country? Let this voice, my dear sir, call upon you, Jefferson, and others. Do not, from a mistaken opinion that we are to sit down under our vine and our own fig-tree, let our hitherto noble struggle end in ignominy. Believe me when I tell you there is danger of it. I have pretty good reasons for thinking that administration, a little while ago, had resolved to give the matter up, and negotiate a peace with us upon almost any terms; but I shall be much mistaken if they do not now, from the present state of our currency, dissensions, and other circumstances, push matters to the utmost extremity. Nothing I am sure will prevent it but the intervention of Spain, and their disappointed hope from Russia."

The circumstances in the situation and temper of America, which made so deep an impression on the Commander-in-chief, operated with equal force on the British commissioners, and induced them to think that, by continuing the war, more favourable terms than were now demanded might be obtained. They seem to have taken up the opinion that the mass of the people, fatigued and worn out by the complicated calamities of the struggle, sincerely desired an accommodation on the terms proposed by Great Britain; and that the increasing difficulties resulting from the failure of public credit, would induce them to desert congress, or compel that body to accede to those terms. These opinions, when communicated to the government, most probably contributed to protract the war.

The narrative of military transactions will now be resumed.

The British arms had heretofore been chiefly directed against the northern and middle states. The strongest parts of the American continent were pressed by their whole force; and, with the exception of the attempt on Sullivan's island in 1776, no serious design had yet been manifested to make an impression in the south. Entertaining the most confident hopes of recovering all the colonies, the British government had not prosecuted the war with a view to partial conquest. But the loss of the army commanded by Burgoyne, the alliance of America with France, and the unexpected obstinacy with which the contest was maintained, had diminished their confidence; and, when the pacific propositions made in 1778 were rejected, the resolution seems to have been taken to change, materially, the object of their military operations; and, maintaining possession of the islands of New York, to direct their arms against the southern states, on which, it was believed, a considerable impression might be made.

It was not unreasonable to suppose that the influence of this impression might extend northward; but, however this might be, the actual conquest and possession of several states would, when negotiations for a general peace should take place, give a complexion to those negotiations, and afford plausible ground for insisting to retain territory already acquired. The most active and interesting operations therefore of the succeeding campaigns, were in the southern states.

Lieutenant Colonel Campbell, who sailed from the Hook about the last of November 1778, escorted by a small squadron commanded by Commodore Hyde Parker, reached the isle of Tybee, near the Savannah, on the 23d of December; and, in a few days, the fleet and the transports passed the bar, and anchored in the river.

The command of the southern army, composed of the troops of South Carolina and Georgia, had been committed to Major General Robert Howe, who, in the course of the preceding summer, had invaded East Florida.[1] The diseases incident to the climate, made such ravages among his raw soldiers, that, though he had scarcely seen an enemy, he found himself compelled to

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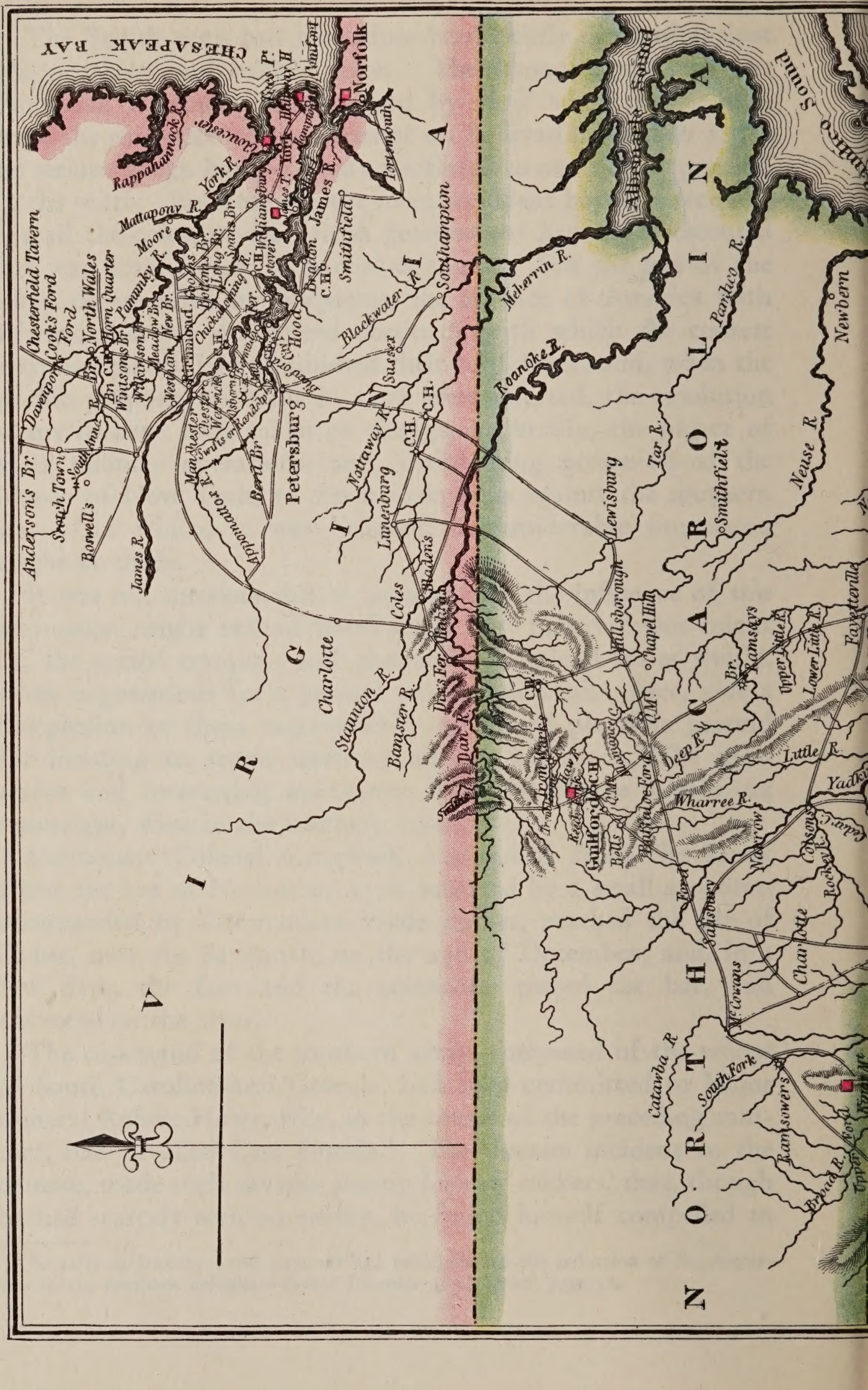
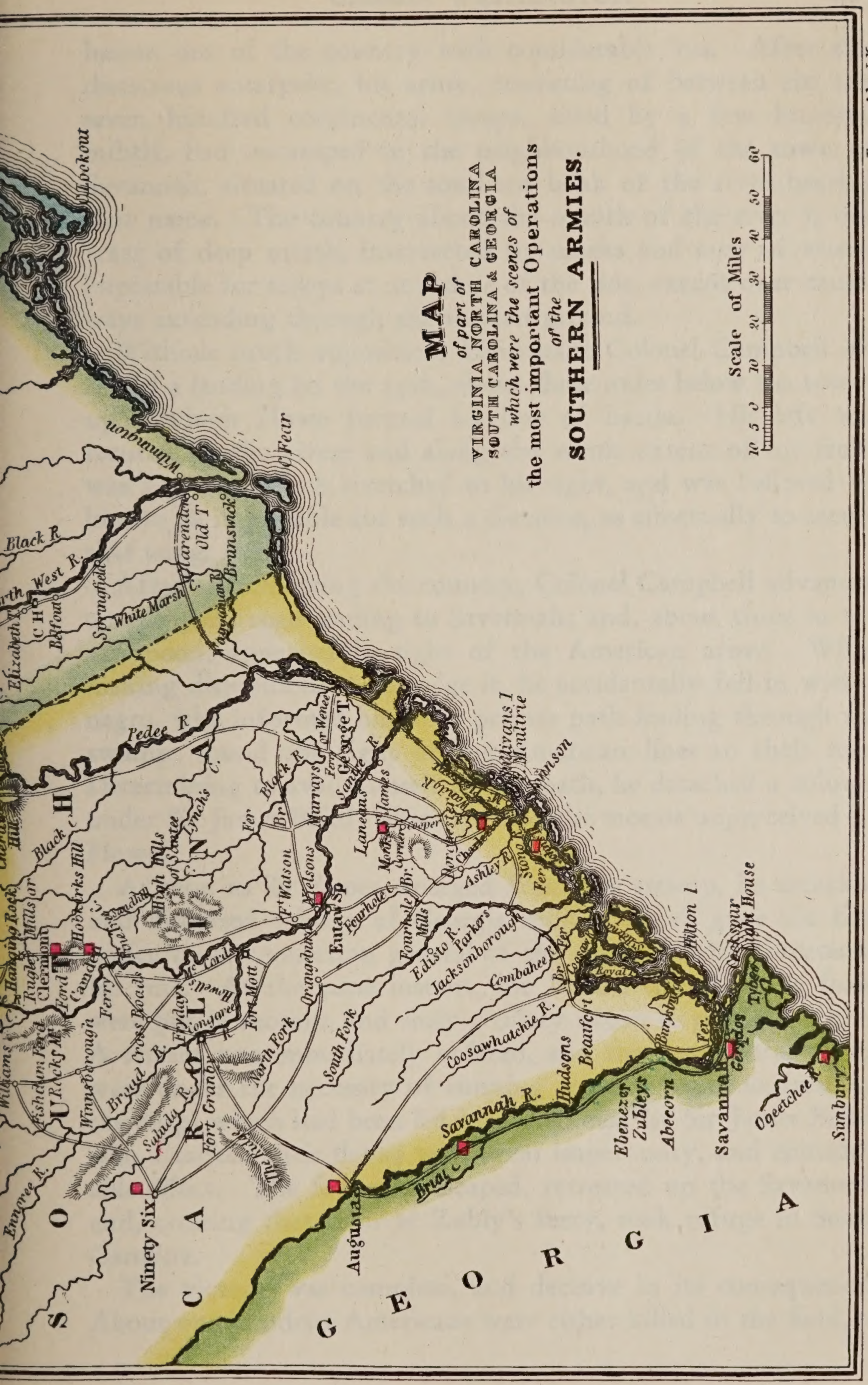
[1] So early as January 1776, congress had recommended the reduction of St. Augustine to the southern colonies.—*Secret Journals of Congress, page* 38.



VIRGINIA
NORTH CAROLINA
CHESAPEAK BAY
Rappahannock R.
Mattapony R.
York R.
Gloucester
York
Hampton
Williamsburg
James R.
Norfolk
Portsmouth
Smithfield
Blackwater R.
Southampton
Sussex
Nottaway R.
Petersburg
Richmond
Manchester
Chesterfield Tavern
Cook's Ford
North Wales
Anderson's Br.
Scotch Town
Boswell's
Appomattox R.
Lunenburg
Charlotte
Staunton R.
Banister R.
Dan R.
Meherrin R.
Roanoke R.
Albemarle Sound
Pamlico Sound
Pamlico R.
Newbern
Tar R.
Neuse R.
Smithfield
Lewisburg
Hillsborough
Chapel Hill
Guilford C.H.
Haw R.
Reedy Fork
Deep R.
Ramsays
Fayetteville
Wharree R.
Yadkin
Salisbury
Charlotte
McCowans
Catawba R.
South Fork
Ramsowers
Broad R.



MAP
of part of
VIRGINIA NORTH CAROLINA
SOUTH CAROLINA & GEORGIA
which were the scenes of
the most important Operations
of the
SOUTHERN ARMIES.

Scale of Miles

Engraved by J. Yeager.

10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 60
C. Lookout
Wilmington
C. Fear
Black R.
North West R.
Elizabeth T.
C H
Belfont
Springfield
White Marsh
Clarendon
Old T.
Waccamaw R.
Brunswick
Pedee R.
Cheraw Hill
Black R.
Hanging Rock
Rugeley
Clermont
Mills or
Hobkirks Hill
Camden
Ford
Lynchs C.
High Hills of Santee
Black R.
Fer.
Br.
Murrays Fer. or Wenee
George T.
Santee
Laneans
St. James
Sullivans I.
Moultrie
Cooper R.
Monks Corner
Dorchester
Charlestown
Ashley R.
Stono R.
Ft. Johnson
Fowler's Fer.
Ft. Watson
Nelsons
Eutaw Sp.
Fourhole C.
Fourhole Mills
Edisto R.
Parkers
Jacksonborough
Combahee R.
Fer.
Br.
Port Royal I.
Hilton I.
Cockspur
Light House
Tybee
Beaufort
Coosawhatchie R.
Purysburg
Fer.
Savannah
Gerardos
Ogeechee R.
Sunbury
Hudsons
Savannah R.
Ebenezer
Zubleys
Abecorn
Briar C.
Augusta
Ninety Six
Saluda R.
Broad R.
Enoree R.
Williams
Fishdam Ford
Rocky Mt.
Winnsborough
Cross Roads
Ferry
Frydays
Howells
Congaree R.
Ft. Mott
Mc Cords
Fort Granby
North Fork
South Fork
Orangeburgh
The Ridge
S O U T H C A R O L I N A
G E O R G I A

hasten out of the country with considerable loss. After this disastrous enterprise, his army, consisting of between six and seven hundred continental troops, aided by a few hundred militia, had encamped in the neighbourhood of the town of Savannah, situated on the southern bank of the river bearing that name. The country about the mouth of the river is one tract of deep marsh, intersected by creeks and cuts of water, impassable for troops at any time of the tide, except over causeways extending through the sunken ground.

Without much opposition, Lieutenant Colonel Campbell effected a landing on the 29th, about three miles below the town; upon which Howe formed his line of battle. His left was secured by the river; and along the whole extent of his front was a morass which stretched to his right, and was believed by him to be impassable for such a distance, as effectually to secure that wing.

After reconnoitring the country, Colonel Campbell advanced on the great road leading to Savannah; and, about three in the afternoon, appeared in sight of the American army. While making dispositions to dislodge it, he accidentally fell in with a negro, who informed him of a private path leading through the swamp, round the right of the American lines to their rear. Determining to avail himself of this path, he detached a column under Sir James Baird, which entered the morass unperceived by Howe.

As soon as Sir James emerged from the swamp, he attacked and dispersed a body of Georgia militia, which gave the first notice to the American general of the danger which threatened his rear. At the same instant, the British troops in his front were put in motion, and their artillery began to play upon him. A retreat was immediately ordered, and the continental troops were under the necessity of running across a plain, in front of the corps which had been led into their rear by Sir James Baird, who attacked their flanks with great impetuosity, and considerable effect. The few who escaped, retreated up the Savannah, and, crossing that river at Zubly's ferry, took refuge in South Carolina.

The victory was complete, and decisive in its consequences. About one hundred Americans were either killed in the field, or drowned in attempting to escape through a deep swamp. Thirty-eight officers, and four hundred and fifteen privates, were taken. Forty-eight pieces of cannon, twenty-three mortars, the fort with all its military-stores, a large quantity of provisions collected for the use of the army, and the capital of Georgia, fell into the hands of the conqueror. These advantages were obtained at the expense of only seven killed, and nineteen wounded.

No military force now remained in Georgia, except the garrison of Sunbury, whose retreat to South Carolina was cut off. All the lower part of that state was occupied by the British, who adopted measures to secure the conquest they had made. The inhabitants were treated with a lenity as wise as it was humane. Their property was spared, and their persons protected. To make the best use of victory, and of the impression produced by the moderation of the victors, a proclamation was issued, inviting the inhabitants to repair to the British standard, and offering protection to those who would return to their allegiance.

The effect of these measures did not disappoint those who adopted them. The inhabitants flocked in great numbers to the royal standard; military corps for the protection of the country were formed; and posts were established for a considerable distance up the river.

The northern frontier of Georgia being supposed to be settled into a state of quiet, Colonel Campbell turned his attention towards Sunbury, and was about to proceed against that place, when he received intelligence that it had surrendered to General Prevost.

Sir Henry Clinton had ordered that officer to co-operate from East Florida, with Colonel Campbell. On hearing that the troops from the north were off the coast, he entered the southern frontier of Georgia, and invested Sunbury, which, after a slight resistance, surrendered at discretion. Having placed a garrison in the fort, he proceeded to Savannah, took command of the army, and detached Colonel Campbell with eight hundred regulars and a few provincials to Augusta, which fell without resistance, and thus the whole state of Georgia was reduced.

Jan. 9.

While the expedition conducted by Lieutenant Colonel Campbell was preparing at New York, congress was meditating the conquest of East Florida.

The delegates of South Carolina and Georgia, anxious that a general of more experience than Howe should command in the southern department, had earnestly pressed that he should be recalled, and that General Lincoln, whose military reputation was high, should be appointed to succeed him. In compliance with their solicitations, Howe was ordered in September, 1778, to repair to the head quarters of General Washington, and Lincoln was directed to proceed immediately to Charleston, in South Carolina, in order to take command in the southern department. In pursuance of this resolution, General Lincoln repaired to Charleston, where he found the military affairs of the country in a state of utter derangement. Congress had established no continental military chest in the southern department. This omission produced a dependence on the government of the state for supplies to move the army on any emergency, and consequent subjection of the troops in continental service to its control. The militia, though taken into continental service, considered themselves as subject only to the military code of the state. These regulations threatened to embarrass all military operations, and to embroil the general with the civil government.

While Lincoln was labouring to make arrangements for the ensuing campaign, he received intelligence of the appearance of the enemy off the coast. The militia of North Carolina, amounting to two thousand men, commanded by Generals Ash and Rutherford, had already reached Charleston; but were unarmed, and congress had been unable to provide magazines in this part of the union. These troops were, therefore, entirely dependent on South Carolina for every military equipment; and arms were not delivered to them until it was too late to save the capital of Georgia.

So soon as it was ascertained that the British fleet had entered the Savannah river, General Lincoln proceeded with the utmost expedition towards the scene of action. On his march, he received intelligence of the victory gained over General Howe;

and was soon afterwards joined by the remnant of the defeated army at Purysburg, a small town on the north side of the Savannah, where he established his head quarters. Jan. 3.

The regular force commanded by General Prevost must have amounted to at least three thousand effective men; and this number was increased by irregulars who had joined him in Georgia. Feb. 1. The American army rather exceeded three thousand six hundred men, of whom not quite two thousand five hundred were effective. Something more than one thousand were continental troops, part of whom were new levies; the rest were militia.

The theatre of action was so well adapted to defensive war, that, although General Prevost was decidedly superior to his adversary, it was difficult to extend his conquests into South Carolina. With the view of entering that state by the way of the sea coast, he detached Major Gardner with about two hundred men, to take possession of the island of Port Royal. That officer, soon after reaching his place of destination, was attacked by General Moultrie, and compelled to retreat with considerable loss. This repulse checked the designs of Prevost on South Carolina.

From the commencement of the war, a considerable proportion of the western inhabitants of the three southern states had been attached to the royal cause. The first successes of the British were soon communicated to them, and they were invited to assemble and join the king's standard at Augusta. About seven hundred embodied themselves on the frontiers of South Carolina, and began their march to that place. They were overtaken by Colonel Pickens at the head of the neighbouring militia, near Kittle Creek, and defeated with considerable loss. Colonel Boyd, their leader, was among the slain; and several of those who escaped were apprehended, tried, and five of them executed as traitors. About three hundred reached the British out-posts, and joined the royal standard. This defeat broke the spirits of the tories for a time; and preserved quiet in the west.

As the American army gained strength by reinforcements of militia, General Lincoln began to contemplate offensive operations. A detachment had been stationed nearly opposite to

Augusta under General Ash, and he purposed joining that officer so soon as a sufficient force could be collected, and attempting to recover the upper parts of Georgia. Before he was able to execute this plan, General Prevost withdrew his troops from Augusta to Hudson's Ferry. Ash was then ordered to cross the Savannah, and take post near the confluence of Briar Creek with that river. This camp was thought unassailable. Its left was covered by a deep swamp, and by the Savannah. The front was secured by Briar Creek, which is unfordable several miles, and makes an acute angle with the river.

Having determined to dislodge the Americans from this position, Prevost kept up the attention of General Lincoln by the semblance of a design to cross the Savannah; and, at the same time amused General Ash with a feint on his front, while Lieutenant Colonel Prevost made a circuit of about fifty miles, and, crossing Briar Creek fifteen miles above March 3. the ground occupied by Ash, came down, unperceived and unsuspected, on his rear. Ash, unused to the stratagems of war, was so completely engaged by the manœuvres in his front, that Lieutenant Colonel Prevost was almost in his camp before any intelligence of his approach was received. The continental troops under General Elbert were drawn out to oppose him, and commenced the action with great gallantry; but most of the militia threw away their arms and fled in confusion. As they precipitated themselves into the swamp and swam the river not many of them were taken. General Elbert and his small band of continental troops, aided by one regiment of North Carolina militia, were soon overpowered by numbers, and the survivors were compelled to surrender themselves prisoners of war. The killed, and taken amounted to between three and four hundred men. General Elbert and Colonel MʻIntosh were among the latter. But the loss sustained by the American army was much more considerable. The dispersed militia returned to their homes; and not more than four hundred and fifty of them could be reassembled.

This victory was supposed to give the British such complete possession of Georgia, that a proclamation was issued the succeeding day by General Prevost, establishing civil government, and appointing executive and judicial officers to administer it.

These disasters, instead of terrifying South Carolina into submission, animated that state to greater exertions. Mr. John Rutledge, a gentleman of great talents and decision, was elected governor; and the legislature passed an act empowering him and the council to do every thing that appeared to him and them necessary for the public good. All the energies of the state were drawn forth. The militia were called out in great numbers, and the laws for their government were rendered more severe.[1]

Thus reinforced, General Lincoln resumed his plan for recovering the upper parts of Georgia; and marched April 23. the main body of his army up the Savannah.

This river was now swelled greatly beyond its usual limits; and the swamps, marshes, and creeks which intersect the country being full seemed to present an almost impassable barrier to an invading army. A small military force being deemed sufficient to arrest the progress of an enemy through a route which, if at all practicable, was so difficult, about eight hundred of the state militia, aided by two hundred continental troops, were left with General Moultrie for the defence of the country.

Aware of the importance of this movement, and hoping to recall Lincoln by alarming him for the safety of Charleston, General Prevost suddenly crossed the Savannah with three April 28. thousand men; and, advancing rapidly on General Moultrie, obliged him to retreat with precipitation. The militia could not be prevailed on to defend the passes with any degree of firmness; and Moultrie, instead of drawing aid from the surrounding country, sustained an alarming diminution of numbers by desertion.

On the passage of the river by Prevost, an express had been despatched to Lincoln with the intelligence. Persuaded that the British general could meditate no serious attempt on Charleston, and that the real object was to induce him to abandon the enterprise in which he was engaged, he detached a reinforcement of three hundred light troops to aid Moultrie, and crossing the Savannah himself, continued his march down the south side of that river towards the capital of Georgia.

Though the original purpose of General Prevost had been limited to the security of Georgia, the opposition he encountered was so much less than he had expected; the temper of the country was so apparent; the assurances of those who flocked to his standard; of the general disposition of the people to terminate the calamities of war by submission, were so often and so confidently repeated, that he was emboldened to extend his views, and to hazard the continuation of his march to Charleston.

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[1] Ramsay.

On receiving intelligence of this threatening aspect of affairs in South Carolina, Lincoln recrossed the Savannah, and hastened to the relief of that state.

The situation of Charleston was extremely critical. The inhabitants, entirely unapprehensive of an attack by land, had directed their whole attention to its protection against an invasion by sea. Had Prevost continued his march with the rapidity with which it was commenced, the place must have fallen. But, after having gained more than half the distance, he halted, and consumed two or three days in deliberating on his future measures. While his intelligence determined him to proceed, and assured him of a state of things which rendered success almost certain, that state of things was rapidly changing. Fortifications on the land side were commenced and prosecuted with unremitting labour, the neighbouring militia were drawn into the town; the reinforcements detached by General Lincoln, and the remnant of the legion of Pulaski arrived; and the governor also entered the city, at the head of some troops which had been stationed at Orangeburg.

May 10.

The next morning Prevost crossed Ashly river, and encamped just without cannon shot of the works. The town was summoned to surrender, and the day was spent in sending and receiving flags. The neutrality of South Carolina during the war, leaving the question whether that state should finally belong to Great Britain or the United States, to be settled in the treaty of peace, was proposed by the garrison, and rejected by Prevost; who required that they should surrender themselves prisoners of war. This proposition being also rejected, the garrison prepared to sustain an assault. But an attempt to carry the works by storm was too hazardous to be made; and Prevost came to the prudent resolution of decamping that night, and recrossing Ashly river.

The British army passed into the island of St. James, and thence to that of St. John's, which lies south of Charleston harbour; soon after which General Lincoln encamped in the neighbourhood, so as to confine them in a great degree to the island they occupied. This island is separated from the main land by an inlet, to which the name of Stono river has been given; and the communication is preserved by a ferry. A British post was established upon the main land at this ferry, and works were thrown up in front for its defence. When Prevost commenced his retreat, and the troops were moving from island to island, the occasion seemed a fair one for attacking it. Only eight hundred men, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Maitland, defended it; but a large corps still lay on the island. To prevent these troops from supporting those on the main land General Moultrie, who commanded in Charleston, was ordered to pass over a body of militia into James's island, who should amuse the enemy in St. John's, while a real attack should be made on the post at the ferry. About seven in the morning, General Lincoln commenced this attack with about one thousand men; and continued it with great spirit, until he perceived that strong reinforcements were crossing over from the island; when he called off his troops, and retreated, unmolested, to his old ground.

June 20.

General Moultrie had been unable to execute that part of the plan which devolved on him. Boats were not in readiness to convey the men into James's island, and consequently the feint on St. John's was not made.

The loss of the Americans, in killed and wounded, amounted to twenty-four officers, and one hundred and twenty-five privates. That of the British was stated to be rather less.

Three days after this action, the posts at Stono and St. John's were evacuated. The heat now became too excessive for active service; and the British army, after establishing a post on the island contiguous to Port Royal and St. Helena, retired into Georgia and St. Augustine.

The American militia dispersed, leaving General Lincoln at the head of about eight hundred men; with whom he retired to Sheldon, where his primary object was to prepare for the next campaign, which it was supposed would open in October.

The invasion of the southern states wore so serious an aspect, that Bland's regiment of cavalry, and the remnant of that lately Baylor's, now commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Washington, with the new levies of Virginia, were ordered to repair to Charleston, and to place themselves under the command of General Lincoln. The execution of these orders was for a time suspended by the invasion of Virginia.

An expedition against that state had been concerted in the spring between Sir Henry Clinton and Sir George Collier, the Commander-in-chief of the British naval force on the American station. The land troops assigned to this service were commanded by General Matthews. The transports, on board of which they embarked, were convoyed by the Admiral in person. On the 9th of May the fleet entered the Chesapeake, and the next day anchored in Hampton Roads.

Virginia had raised a regiment of artillery for the performance of garrison duty in the state, which had been distributed along the eastern frontier; and slight fortifications had been constructed in the most important situations, which were defensible on the side of the water, but were not tenable against a military force strong enough to act on land. Fort Nelson, on the west side of Elizabeth river, garrisoned by about one hundred and fifty soldiers, commanded by Major Matthews, was designed to protect the towns of Norfolk and Portsmouth, which were on each side of the river just above it; and the town of Gosport, which lies still higher up on a point of land intervening between two branches of the river. Norfolk and Portsmouth were places of the most considerable commerce in Virginia. Large supplies for the army were deposited in them; and the state government had established at Gosport a marine yard, where ships of war and other vessels were building, for which naval stores were collected to a very great amount. The destruction of these vessels and stores constituted the principal object of General Matthews.

On the morning of the tenth, the fleet entered Elizabeth river, and the troops were landed about three miles below the fort, without opposition. Foreseeing that the works would be attacked the next morning on the land side, the garrison evacuated the fort in the night, and took refuge in a deep and extensive swamp, called the Dismal, which could not be penetrated without difficulty, even by single persons.

The whole sea-board, on the south side of James's river, being now in possession of General Matthews, he fixed his head quarters at Portsmouth, whence small parties were detached to Norfolk, Gosport, Kemps' landing, and Suffolk, where military and naval stores to a great amount, and several vessels richly laden, fell into his hands.

This invasion was of short duration. General Matthews, after destroying the magazines which had been collected in the small towns near the coast, and the vessels in the rivers, was ordered by Sir Henry Clinton to return to New York, where he arrived towards the last of May.

The Admiral and General were both so impressed with the importance of Portsmouth as a permanent station, that they united in representing to the Commander-in-chief the advantages to be derived from keeping possession of it. But, in the opinion of Sir Henry Clinton, the army did not at that time admit of so many subdivisions; and, with a view to more interesting objects, Portsmouth was evacuated.

CHAPTER XVI

THE barbarities committed by the Indians, in the course of the preceding year, on the inhabitants of the western frontiers, had added motives of mingled resentment and humanity to those of national interest, for employing a larger force in the protection of that part of the union than had heretofore been devoted to it.

1779.

General Washington had always believed that it was impossible to defend the immense western frontier by any chain of posts which could be established; and that the country would be protected much more certainly by offensive than by defensive war. His plan was to penetrate into the heart of the Indian settlements with a force competent to the destruction of their towns; and also to reduce the British post at Niagara, which gave its possessors an almost irresistible influence over the six nations. This plan constituted one of the various subjects of conference with the committee of congress in Philadelphia, and received the entire approbation of that body.

The state governments also took a strong interest in the protection of their western settlements. Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania, applied, severally, to congress, urging the adoption of such vigorous measures as would secure the frontiers against a repetition of the horrors which had been already perpetrated. These papers were referred to the committee which had been appointed to confer with General Washington, in conformity with whose report it was resolved, "that the Commander-in-chief be directed to take efficient measures for the protection of the inhabitants, and chastisement of the savages."

The Six Nations had made some advances towards acquiring the comforts of civilized life. Several comfortable houses were to be seen in their populous villages; and their fertile fields and orchards yielded an abundant supply of corn and fruit. Some few of their towns were attached to the United States; but, in general, they were under the influence of the British. Many of the loyalists had taken refuge among them, and had added to their strength without diminishing their ferocity. It was determined to lead a force into these villages, sufficient to overpower any numbers they could possibly bring into the field, and to destroy the settlements they had made. To guard against reinforcements from Canada, means were used to inspire that colony with fears for itself.

As the army destined for this expedition was about to move, alarming symptoms of discontent appeared in a part of it. The Jersey brigade, which had been stationed during the winter at Elizabethtown, was ordered early in May, to march by regiments. This order was answered by a letter from General Maxwell, stating that the officers of the first regiment had delivered a remonstrance to their Colonel, addressed to the legislature of the state, declaring that, unless their complaints on the subjects of pay and support should obtain the immediate attention of that body, they were, at the expiration of three days, to be considered as having resigned; and requesting the legislature, in that event, to appoint other officers to succeed them. They declared, however, their readiness to make every preparation for obeying the orders which had been given, and to continue their attention to the regiment until a reasonable time should elapse for the appointment of their successors. "This," added the letter of General Maxwell, "is a step they are extremely unwilling to take, but it is such as I make no doubt they will all take; nothing but necessity—their not being able to support themselves in time to come, and being loaded with debts contracted in time past, could have induced them to resign at so critical a juncture."

The intelligence conveyed in this letter made a serious impression on the Commander-in-chief. He was strongly attached to the army and to its interests; had witnessed its virtue and its sufferings; and lamented sincerely its present distresses. The justice of the complaints made by the officers could no more be denied, than the measure they had adopted could be approved. Relying on their patriotism and on his own influence, he immediately wrote a letter to General Maxwell, to be laid before them, in which, mingling the sensibility of a friend with the authority of a general, he addressed to their understanding and to their love of country, observations calculated to invite their whole attention to the consequences which must result from the step they were about to take.

"The patience and perseverance of the army," proceeds the letter, "have been, under every disadvantage, such as to do them the highest honour both at home and abroad, and have inspired me with an unlimited confidence of their virtue, which has consoled me amidst every perplexity and reverse of fortune, to which our affairs, in a struggle of this nature, were necessarily exposed. Now that we have made so great a progress to the attainment of the end we have in view, so that we can not fail without a most shameful desertion of our own interests, any thing like a change of conduct would imply a very unhappy change of principles, and a forgetfulness, as well of what we owe to ourselves, as to our country. Did I suppose it possible this could be the case, even in a single regiment of the army, I should be mortified and chagrined beyond expression. I should feel it as a wound given to my own honour, which I consider as embarked with that of the army at large. But this I believe to be impossible. Any corps that was about to set an example of the kind, would weigh well the consequences, and no officer of common discernment and sensibility would hazard them. If they should stand alone in it, independent of other consequences, what would be their feelings on reflecting that they had held themselves out to the world in a point of light inferior to the rest of the army. Or if their example should be followed, and become general, how could they console themselves for having been the foremost in bringing ruin and disgrace upon their country. They would remember that the army would share a double portion of the general infamy and distress, and that the character of an American officer would become as infamous as it is now glorious.

"I confess the appearances in the present instance are disagreeable; but I am convinced they seem to mean more than they really do. The Jersey officers have not been outdone by any others in the qualities either of citizens or soldiers; and I am confident, no part of them would seriously intend any thing that would be a stain on their former reputation. The gentlemen can not be in earnest; they have only reasoned wrong about the means of obtaining a good end, and, on consideration, I hope and flatter myself they will renounce what must appear to be improper. At the opening of a campaign, when under marching orders for an important service, their own honour, duty to the public and to themselves, and a regard to military propriety, will not suffer them to persist in a measure which would be a violation of them all. It will even wound their delicacy, coolly to reflect that they have hazarded a step, which has an air of dictating terms to their country, by taking advantage of the necessity of the moment.

"The declaration they have made to the state, at so critical a time, that unless they obtain relief in the short period of three days, they must be considered out of the service, has very much that aspect; and the seeming relaxation of continuing until the state can have a reasonable time to provide other officers, will be thought only a superficial veil. I am now to request that you will convey my sentiments to the gentlemen concerned, and endeavour to make them sensible that they are in an error. The service for which the regiment was intended will not admit of delay. It must at all events march on Monday morning, in the first place to camp, and farther directions will be given when it arrives. I am sure I shall not be mistaken in expecting a prompt and cheerful obedience."

The representations of this letter did not completely produce the desired effect. The officers did not recede from their claims. In an address to the Commander-in-chief, they expressed their unhappiness that any act of theirs should give him pain, but proceeded to justify the step they had taken. Repeated memorials had been presented to their legislature, which had been received with promises of attention, but had been regularly neglected. "At length," said they, "we have lost all confidence in our legislature. Reason and experience forbid that we should have any. Few of us have private fortunes; many have families who already are suffering every thing that can be received from an ungrateful country. Are we then to suffer all the inconveniences, fatigues, and dangers of a military life, while our wives and our children are perishing for want of common necessaries at home;—and that without the most distant prospect of reward, for our pay is now only nominal? We are sensible that your excellency can not wish nor desire this from us.

"We are sorry that you should imagine we meant to disobey orders. It was and still is our determination to march with our regiment, and to do the duty of officers until the legislature should have a reasonable time to appoint others, but no longer.

"We beg leave to assure your Excellency, that we have the highest sense of your ability and virtues;—that executing your orders has ever given us pleasure;—that we love the service, and we love our country;—but when that country gets so lost to virtue and justice as to forget to support its servants, it then becomes their duty to retire from its service."

This letter was peculiarly embarrassing. To adopt a stern course of proceeding might hazard the loss of the Jersey line, an event not less injurious to the service, than painful to himself. To take up the subject without doing too much for the circumstances of the army, would be doing too little for the occasion. He therefore declined taking any other notice of the letter, than to declare through General Maxwell that, while they continued to do their duty in conformity with the determination they had expressed, he should only regret the part they had taken, and should hope they would perceive its impropriety.

The legislature of New Jersey, alarmed at the decisive step taken by the officers, was at length induced to pay some attention to their situation; they consenting, on their part, to withdraw their remonstrance. In the meantime, they continued to perform their duty; and their march was not delayed by this unpleasant altercation.

In communicating this transaction to congress, General Washington took occasion to remind that body of his having frequently urged the absolute necessity of some general and adequate provision for the officers of the army. "I shall only observe," continued the letter, "that the distresses in some corps are so great, either where they were not until lately attached to any particular state, or where the state has been less provident, that the officers have solicited even to be supplied with the clothing destined for the common soldiery, coarse and unsuitable as it was. I had not power to comply with the request.

"The patience of men animated by a sense of duty and honour, will support them to a certain point, beyond which it will not go. I doubt not congress will be sensible of the danger of an extreme in this respect, and will pardon my anxiety to obviate it."

Before the troops destined for the grand expedition were put in motion, an enterprise of less extent was undertaken, which was completely successful. A plan for surprising the towns of the Onondagas, one of the nearest of the hostile tribes, having been formed by General Schuyler, and approved by the Commander-in-chief, Colonel Van Schaick, assisted by Lieutenant Colonel Willet, and Major Cochran, marched from fort Schuyler on the morning of the 19th of April, at the head of between five and six hundred men; and, on the third day, reached the point of destination. The whole settlement was destroyed, after which the detachment returned to fort Schuyler without the loss of a single man. For this handsome display of talents as a partisan, the thanks of congress were voted to Colonel Van Schaick, and the officers and soldiers under his command.

The cruelties exercised by the Indians in the course of the preceding year, had given a great degree of importance to the expedition now meditated against them; and the relative military strength and situation of the two parties, rendered it improbable that any other offensive operations could be carried on by the Americans in the course of the present campaign. The army under the command of Sir Henry Clinton, exclusive of the troops in the southern department, was computed at between sixteen and seventeen thousand men. The American army, the largest division of which lay at Middlebrook, under the immediate command of General Washington, was rather inferior to that of the British in real strength. The grand total, except those in the southern and western country, including officers of every description, amounted to about sixteen thousand. Three thousand of these were in New England under the command of General Gates; and the remaining thirteen thousand were cantoned on both sides of the North River. The bare statement of numbers, must show the incompetency of the American army to the expulsion of the British from either New York or Rhode Island. On their part, therefore, the plan of the campaign was, necessarily, defensive; and the hazards and difficulties attending the execution of even a defensive plan were considerable.

Independent of an extensive coast, at all places accessible to the invading army, the Hudson, penetrating deep into the country which was to be the theatre of action, gave great advantages in their military operations to those who commanded the water.

After the destruction of forts Clinton and Montgomery in 1777, it had been determined to construct the fortifications intended for the future defence of the North River, at West Point, a position which, being more completely embosomed in the hills, was deemed more defensible. The works had been prosecuted with unremitting industry, but were far from being completed.

Some miles below West Point, about the termination of the highlands, is King's ferry, where the great road, affording the most convenient communication between the middle and eastern states, crosses the North River. The ferry is completely commanded by the two opposite points of land. That on the west side, a rough and elevated piece of ground, is denominated Stony Point; and the other, on the east side, a flat neck of land projecting far into the water, is called Verplank's Point. The command of King's ferry was an object worth the attention of either army; and Washington had comprehended the points which protect it within his plan of defence for the highlands. A small but strong work, termed fort Fayette, was completed at Verplank's, and was garrisoned by a company commanded by Captain Armstrong. The works on Stony Point were unfinished. As the season for active operations approached, Sir Henry Clinton formed a plan for opening the campaign with a brilliant *coup de main* up the North River; and, towards the latter end of May, made preparations for the enterprise.

These preparations were immediately communicated to General Washington, who was confident that the British general meditated an attack on the forts in the highlands, or designed to take a position between those forts and Middlebrook, in order to interrupt the communication between the different parts of the American army, to prevent their reunion, and to beat them in detail. Measures were instantly taken to counteract either of these designs. The intelligence from New York was communicated to Generals Putnam and M'Dougal, who were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to march; and, on the 29th of May, the army moved by divisions from Middlebrook towards the highlands. On the 30th, the British army, commanded by Sir Henry Clinton in person, and convoyed by Sir George Collier, proceeded up the river; and General Vaughan, at the head of the largest division, landed next morning, about eight miles below Verplank's. The other division, under the particular command of General Patterson, but accompanied by Sir Henry Clinton, advancing farther up, landed on the west side within three miles of Stony Point.

June 1.

That place being immediately abandoned, General Patterson took possession of it on the same afternoon. He dragged some heavy cannon and mortars to the summit of the hill in the course of the night; and, at five next morning, opened a battery on fort Fayette, at the distance of about one thousand yards. During the following night, two galleys passed the fort, and, anchoring above it, prevented the escape of the garrison by water; while General Vaughan invested it closely by land. No means of defending the fort, or of saving themselves remaining, the garrison became prisoners of war. Immediate directions were given for completing the works at both posts, and for putting Stony Point, in particular, in a strong state of defence.

It is scarcely supposable that the views of Sir Henry Clinton in moving up the river, were limited to this single acquisition. The means employed were so disproportioned to the object, as to justify a belief that he contemplated farther and more important conquests. Whatever may have been his plans, the measures of precaution taken by Washington counteracted their execution; and before Clinton was in a situation to proceed against West Point, General M'Dougal was so strengthened, and the American army took such a position on the strong grounds about the Hudson, that the enterprise became too hazardous to be farther prosecuted.

After completing the fortifications on both sides the river, at King's ferry, Sir Henry Clinton placed a strong garrison in each fort, and proceeded down the river to Philipsburg. The relative situation of the hostile armies presenting insuperable obstacles to any grand operation, they could be employed offensively only on detached expeditions. Connecticut, from its contiguity to New York, and its extent of sea coast, was peculiarly exposed to invasion. The numerous small cruizers which plied in the Sound, to the great annoyance of British commerce, and the large supplies of provisions drawn from the adjacent country, for the use of the continental army, furnished great inducements to Sir Henry Clinton to direct his enterprises particularly against that state. He also hoped to draw General Washington from his impregnable position on the North River into the low country, and thus obtain an opportunity of striking at some part of his army, or of seizing the posts, which were the great object of the campaign. With these views, he planned an expedition against Connecticut, the command of which was given to Governor Tryon, who reached New Haven bay on the 5th of July, with about two thousand six hundred men.

General Washington was at the time on the lines, examining in person the condition of the works on Stony and Verplank's Points; in consequence of which, the intelligence which was transmitted to head quarters that the fleet had sailed, could not be immediately communicated to the governor of Connecticut, and the first intimation which that state received of its danger, was given by the appearance of the enemy. The militia assembled in considerable numbers with alacrity; but the British effected a landing, and took possession of the town. After destroying the military and naval stores found in the place, they re-embarked, and proceeded westward to Fairfield, which was reduced to ashes. The good countenance shown by the militia at this place is attested by the apology made by General Tryon for the wanton destruction of private property, which disgraced his conduct. "The village was burnt," he says, "to resent the fire of the rebels from their houses, and to mask our retreat."

From Fairfield the fleet crossed the Sound to Huntingdon bay, where it remained until the eleventh, when it recrossed that water, after which the troops were landed in the night on the cow pasture, a peninsula on the east side of the bay of Norwalk. About the same time, a much larger detachment from the British army directed its course towards Horse Neck, and made demonstrations of a design to penetrate into the country in that direction.

On the first intelligence that Connecticut was invaded, General Parsons, a native of that state, had been directed by General Washington to hasten to the scene of action. Placing himself at the head of about one hundred and fifty continental troops, who were supported by considerable bodies of militia, he attacked the British in the morning of the twelfth, as soon as they were in motion, and kept up an irregular distant fire throughout the day. But being too weak to prevent the destruction of any particular town on the coast, Norwalk was reduced to ashes; after which the British re-embarked, and returned to Huntington bay, there to wait for reinforcements. At this place, however, Tryon received orders to return to the White Stone; where, in a conference between Sir Henry Clinton and Sir George Collier, it was determined to proceed against New London with an increased force.

On the invasion of Connecticut, the Commander-in-chief was prompt in his exertions to send continental troops from the nearest encampments to its aid; but, before they could afford any real service, Sir Henry Clinton found it necessary to recall Tryon to the Hudson.

General Washington had planned an enterprise against the posts at King's ferry, comprehending a double attack, to be made at the same time, on both. But the difficulty of a perfect co-operation of detachments, incapable of communicating with each other, determined him to postpone the attack on Verplank's, and to make that part of the plan dependent on the success of the first. His whole attention therefore was turned to Stony Point; and the troops destined for this critical service, proceeded on it as against a single object.

The execution of the plan was entrusted to General Wayne, who commanded the light infantry of the army. Secrecy was deemed so much more essential to success than numbers, that no addition was made to the force already on the lines. One brigade was ordered to commence its march, so as to reach the scene of action in time to cover the troops engaged in the attack, should any unlooked for disaster befall them; and Major Lee of the light dragoons, who had been eminently useful in obtaining the intelligence which led to the enterprise, was associated with General Wayne, as far as cavalry could be employed in such a service. The night of the fifteenth, and the hour of twelve, were chosen for the assault.

Stony Point is a commanding hill, projecting far into the Hudson, which washes three-fourths of its base. The remaining fourth is, in a great measure, covered by a deep marsh, commencing near the river on the upper side, and continuing into it below. Over this marsh there is only one crossing place; but at its junction with the river, is a sandy beach, passable at low tide. On the summit of this hill stood the fort, which was furnished with heavy ordnance. Several breast-works and strong batteries were advanced in front of the main work; and, about half way down the hill, were two rows of abattis. The batteries were calculated to command the beach and the crossing place of the marsh, and to rake and enfilade any column which might be advancing from either of those points towards the fort. In addition to these defences, several vessels of war were stationed in the river, and commanded the ground at the foot of the hill. The garrison consisted of about six hundred men, commanded by Colonel Johnson.

General Wayne arrived about eight in the afternoon at Spring Steel's, one and a half miles from the fort; and made his dispositions for the assault.

It was intended to attack the works on the right and left flanks at the same instant. The regiments of Febiger and of Meigs, with Major Hull's detachment, formed the right column; and Butler's regiment, with two companies under Major Murfree, formed the left. One hundred and fifty volunteers, led by Lieutenant Colonel Fleury and Major Posey, constituted the van of the right; and one hundred volunteers under Major Stewart, composed the van of the left. At half past eleven the two columns moved to the assault, the van of each with unloaded muskets, and fixed bayonets. They were each preceded by a forlorn hope of twenty men, the one commanded by Lieutenant Gibbon, and the other by Lieutenant Knox. They reached the marsh undiscovered; and, at twenty minutes after twelve, commenced the assault.

Both columns rushed forward under a tremendous fire. Surmounting every obstacle, they entered the works at the point of the bayonet; and, without discharging a single musket, obtained possession of the fort.

The humanity displayed by the conquerors was not less conspicuous, nor less honourable than their courage. Not an individual suffered after resistance had ceased.

All the troops engaged in this perilous service manifested a degree of ardour and impetuosity, which proved them to be capable of the most difficult enterprises; and all distinguished themselves, whose situation enabled them to do so. Colonel Fleury was the first to enter the fort and strike the British standard. Major Posey mounted the works almost at the same instant, and was the first to give the watch word—"The fort's our own."—Lieutenants Gibbon and Knox performed the service allotted to them with a degree of intrepidity which could not be surpassed. Of twenty men who constituted the party of the former, seventeen were killed or wounded.

Sixty-three of the garrison were killed, including two officers. The prisoners amounted to five hundred and forty-three, among whom were one lieutenant colonel, four captains, and twenty subaltern officers. The military stores taken in the fort were considerable.[1]

The loss sustained by the assailants was not proportioned to the apparent danger of the enterprise. The killed and wounded did not exceed one hundred men; General Wayne, who marched with Febiger's regiment in the right column, received a slight wound in the head which stunned him for a time, but did not compel him to leave the column. Being supported by his aids, he entered the fort with the regiment. Lieutenant Colonel Hay was also among the wounded.

Although the design upon fort Fayette had yielded to the desire of securing the success of the attack on Stony Point, it had not been abandoned. Two brigades under General M'Dougal had been ordered to approach the works on Verplank's, in which Colonel Webster commanded, and be in readiness to attack them the instant General Wayne should obtain possession of Stony

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[1] The author was in the covering party, visited the fort next day, and conversed with the officers who had been engaged in storming the works.

Point. That this detachment might not permit the favourable moment to pass unimproved, Wayne had been requested to direct the messenger who should convey the intelligence of his success to the Commander-in-chief, to pass through M'Dougal's camp, and give him advice of that event. He was also requested to turn the cannon of the fort against Verplank's, and the vessels in the river. The last orders were executed, and a heavy cannonade was opened on fort Fayette, and on the vessels, which compelled them to fall down the river. Through some misconception, never explained, the messenger despatched by General Wayne did not call on M'Dougal, but proceeded directly to head quarters. Thus, every advantage expected from the first impression made by the capture of Stony Point was lost; and the garrison had full leisure to recover from the surprise occasioned by that event, and to prepare for an attack. This change of circumstances made it necessary to change the plan of operation. General Howe was directed to take the command of M'Dougal's detachment, to which some pieces of heavy artillery were to be annexed. He was ordered, after effecting a breach in the walls, to make the dispositions for an assault, and to demand a surrender; but not to attempt a storm until it should be dark. To these orders, explicit instructions were added not to hazard his party by remaining before Verplank's, after the British should cross Croton river in force.

Through some unaccountable negligence in the persons charged with the execution of these orders, the battering artillery was not accompanied with suitable ammunition; and the necessary intrenching tools were not brought. These omissions were supplied the next day; but it was then too late to proceed against Verplank's.

On receiving intelligence of the loss of Stony Point, and of the danger to which the garrison of fort Fayette was exposed, Sir Henry Clinton relinquished his views on Connecticut, and made a forced march to Dobbs' ferry. Some troops were immediately embarked to pass up the river, and a light corps was pushed forward to the Croton. This movement relieved fort Fayette.

The failure of the attempt to obtain possession of Verplank's Point, leaving that road of communication still closed, diminished the advantages which had been expected to result from the enterprise so much, that it was deemed unadvisable to maintain Stony Point. On reconnoitring the ground, General Washington believed that the place could not be rendered secure with a garrison of less than fifteen hundred men; a number which could not be spared from the army without weakening it too much for farther operations. He determined therefore to evacuate Stony Point, and retire to the highlands. As soon as this resolution was executed, Sir Henry Clinton repossessed himself of that post, repaired the fortifications, and placed a stronger garrison in it; after which he resumed his former situation at Philipsburg.

The two armies watched each other for some time. At length, Sir Henry Clinton, finding himself unable to attack Washington in the strong position he had taken, or to draw him from it, and being desirous of transferring the theatre of active war to the south, withdrew into York island, and was understood to be strengthening the fortifications erected for its defence, as preparatory to the large detachments he intended making to reinforce the southern army.

Although this movement was made principally with a view to southern operations, it was in some degree hastened by the opinion, that New York required immediate additional protection during the absence of the fleet, which was about to sail for the relief of Penobscot.

Early in June, Colonel M'Clean, with six hundred and fifty men, had penetrated from Nova Scotia into the eastern parts of Maine, and taken possession of a strong piece of ground on the Penobscot, which he had begun to fortify.

The state of Massachusetts, alarmed at an invasion which threatened a serious diminution of territory, determined to dislodge him. A respectable fleet, commanded by Commodore Saltonstal, and an army of near four thousand men, under General Lovell, were prepared with so much celerity, that the whole armament appeared in the Penobscot as early as the 25th of July.

M'Clean had taken possession of a peninsula on the eastern side of Penobscot, and had intrenched the isthmus connecting it with the continent. The part towards the river was steep and difficult of access; and was also defended by his frigates and batteries, the principal of which was constructed about the centre of the peninsula.

After being repulsed in his first attempt, General Lovell effected a landing on the western part of the peninsula, where he ascended a precipice of two hundred feet; and, with the loss of only fifty men killed and wounded, drove the party which defended it from the ground. A battery was erected within seven hundred and fifty yards of the main work of the besieged, and a warm cannonade was kept up for several days on both sides.

Perceiving the difficulty of carrying the place with a militia impatient to return to their homes, General Lovell represented his situation to the government of Massachusetts, who applied to General Gates, then commanding at Providence, for a reinforcement of four hundred continental troops. This request was readily granted, and Jackson's regiment was ordered to Penobscot. In the mean time an ineffectual cannonade was continued, and preparations were made to storm the works on the arrival of the expected reinforcements.

Such was the posture of affairs on the 13th of August, when Lovell received information that Sir George Collier had entered the river with a superior naval force. He re-embarked his whole army the following night, and drew up his flotilla in a crescent across the river, as if determined to maintain its position. This show of resistance was made in the hope of stopping Sir George Collier until the land forces on board the transports could be conveyed up the river, and disembarked on the western shore. But the British admiral was too confident in his strength to permit this stratagem to succeed; and, as he approached, the Americans sought for safety in flight. A general chase and unresisted destruction ensued. The ships of war were blown up, and the transports fled in the utmost confusion up the river. Being pursued by the British squadron, the troops landed in a wild uncultivated country; and were obliged to explore their way, without provisions, through a pathless wilderness, for more than a hundred miles. Exhausted with famine and fatigue, they at length gained the settled parts of the country, after having lost several men who perished in the woods.

While Sir Henry Clinton continued encamped just above Haerlem with his upper posts at Kingsbridge, and the American army preserved its station in the Highlands, a bold plan was formed for surprising a British post at Powles Hook, which was executed with great address by Major Lee.

This officer was employed on the west side of the river with directions to observe the situation of the British in Stony Point, but, principally, to watch the motions of their main army. While his parties scoured the country, he obtained intelligence which suggested the idea of surprising and carrying off the garrison at Powles Hook, a point of land on the west side of the Hudson, immediately opposite the town of New York, penetrating deep into the river. On the point nearest New York, some works had been constructed, which were garrisoned by four or five hundred men.

A deep ditch, into which the water of the river flowed, having over it a drawbridge connected with a barred gate, had been cut across the isthmus, so as to make the Hook, in reality, an island. This ditch could be passed only at low water. Thirty paces within it was a row of abattis running into the river; and some distance in front of it, is a creek fordable only in two places.

This difficulty of access, added to the remoteness of the nearest corps of the American army, impressed the garrison with the opinion that they were perfectly secure; and this opinion produced an unmilitary remissness in the commanding officer, which did not escape the vigilance of Lee.

On receiving his communications, General Washington was inclined to favour the enterprise they suggested; but withheld his full assent, until he was satisfied that the assailants would be able to make good their retreat.

The Hackensack, which communicates with the waters of the Hudson below New York, runs almost parallel with that river quite to its source, and is separated from it only a few miles. This neck is still farther narrowed by a deep creek which divides it, and empties into the Hackensack below fort Lee. West of that river runs the Passaick, which unites with it near Newark, and forms another long and narrow neck of land. From Powles Hook to the new bridge, the first place where the Hackensack could be crossed without boats, the distance is fourteen miles; and from the North River to the road leading from the one place to the other, there are three points of interception, the nearest of which is less than two miles, and the farthest not more than three. The British were encamped in full force along the North river, opposite to these points of interception. To diminish the danger of the retreat, it was intended to occupy the roads leading through the mountains of the Hudson to the Hackensack with a select body of troops.

Every preparatory arrangement being made, the night of the eighteenth of August was fixed on for the enterprise. A detachment from the division of Lord Stirling, including three hundred men designed for the expedition, was ordered down as a foraging party. As there was nothing unusual in this movement, it excited no suspicion. Lord Stirling followed with five hundred men, and encamped at the new bridge.

Major Lee, at the head of three hundred men, took the road through the mountains which ran parallel to the North River; and, having secured all the passes into York Island, reached the creek which surrounds the Hook between two and three in the morning. He passed first the creek, and then the ditch undiscovered; and, about three in the morning, entered the main work, and with the loss of only two killed and three wounded, made one hundred and fifty-nine prisoners, including three officers. Very few of the British were killed. Major Sutherland, who commanded the garrison, threw himself with forty or fifty Hessians into a strong redoubt, which it was thought unadviseable to attack, because the time occupied in carrying it might endanger the retreat. Wasting no time in destroying what could easily be replaced, Major Lee hastened to bring off his prisoners and his detachment.

To avoid the danger of retreating up the narrow neck of land which has already been described, some boats had been brought in the course of the night to Dow's Ferry on the Hackensack, not far from Powles Hook. The officer who guarded them was directed to remain until the arrival of the troops engaged in the expedition, which, it was understood, would happen before day. The light having made its appearance without any intelligence from Major Lee, the officer having charge of the boats conjectured that the attack had been postponed; and, to avoid discovery, retired with them to Newark. The head of the retreating column soon afterwards reached the ferry; and, fatigued as they were by the toilsome march of the preceding night, were compelled to pass as rapidly as possible up the narrow neck of land between the two rivers to the new bridge. A horseman was despatched with this information to Lord Stirling, and the line of march was resumed.

About nine in the preceding evening, Major Buskirk had been detached up the North River with a considerable part of the garrison of Powles Hook, and some other troops, for the purpose of falling in with the American party supposed to be foraging about the English neighbourhood.

On receiving intelligence of the disappointment respecting the boats, Lord Stirling took the precaution to detach Colonel Ball with two hundred fresh men to meet Lee, and cover his retreat. Just after Ball had passed, Buskirk entered the main road, and fired on his rear. Taking it for granted that this was only the advanced corps of a large detachment sent to intercept the party retreating from Powles Hook, Ball made a circuit to avoid the enemy; and Buskirk, finding a detachment he had not expected, took the same measure to secure his own retreat. The two parties narrowly missing each other, returned to their respective points of departure; and Lee reached the new bridge without interruption.[1]

This critical enterprise reflected much honour on the partisan with whom it originated, and by whom it was conducted. General Washington announced it to the army in his orders with much approbation; and congress bestowed upon it a degree of applause more adapted to the talent displayed in performing the service than to its magnitude.

A few days after the surprise of Powles Hook, the long expected fleet from Europe, under the command of Admiral Arbuthnot, having on board a reinforcement for the British army, arrived at New York. This reinforcement however did not enable Sir Henry Clinton to enter immediately on that active course of offensive operations which he had meditated. It was soon followed by the Count D'Estaing, who arrived on the southern coast of America with a powerful fleet; after which the British General deemed it necessary to turn all his attention to his own security. Rhode Island, and the posts up the North River was evacuated, and the whole army was collected in New York, the fortifications of which were carried on with unremitting industry.

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[1] The author states these facts from his own observation, and conversations with other officers of the detachment.

The Count D'Estaing and Admiral Byron, having sailed about the same time from the coast of North America, met in the West Indies, where the war was carried on with various success. St. Lucia surrendered to the British, in compensation for which the French took St. Vincents and Grenada. About the time of the capture of the latter island, D'Estaing received reinforcements which gave him a decided naval superiority; after which a battle was fought between the two hostile fleets, in which the Count claimed the victory, and in which so many of the British ships were disabled that the Admiral was compelled to retire into port in order to refit.

The earnest representations made on the part of the United States had prevailed on the cabinet of Versailles to instruct the Count D'Estaing to afford them all the aid in his power; and the present moment seemed a fit one for carrying these orders into execution. Letters from General Lincoln, from the executive of South Carolina, and from the French consul at Charleston, urged him to pay a visit to the southern states; and represented the situation of the British in Georgia to be such that his appearance would insure the destruction of the army in that quarter, and the recovery of the state.

Yielding to these solicitations, the Count sailed with twenty-two ships of the line, and eleven frigates, having on board six thousand soldiers, and arrived so suddenly on the southern coast of America, that the Experiment of fifty guns, and three frigates, fell into his hands. A vessel was sent to Charleston with information of his arrival, and a plan was concerted for the siege of Savannah. D'Estaing was to land three thousand men at Beaulieu on the 11th of September, and Lincoln was to cross the Savannah on the same day with one thousand Americans, and effect a junction with him.

The town of Savannah was, at that time, the head quarters of General Prevost. Apprehending no immediate danger, he had weakened the garrison by establishing several out-posts in Georgia; and by leaving Colonel Maitland with a strong detachment in the island of Port Royal, in South Carolina.

On the appearance of the French fleet, expresses were despatched to Colonel Maitland and to all the out-posts, directing the troops to repair without loss of time to Savannah. These orders were promptly obeyed; and, on the 10th of September, the several detachments in Georgia had all arrived in safety, except the sick and convalescents of the garrison of Sunbury, who were intercepted.

On the 11th, General Lincoln reached Zubly's Ferry, and, on the 15th, was assured that the French had disembarked in force. A junction of the two armies was formed the next day before the town of Savannah.

On the night of the 12th, the Count D'Estaing had landed about three thousand men at Beaulieu; and the next day, before the arrival of General Lincoln, had summoned the garrison to surrender to the arms of the King of France. Being desirous of gaining time, General Prevost answered the summons in such a manner as to encourage the opinion that he designed to capitulate; in the expectation of which a suspension of hostilities for twenty-four hours was granted. In that important interval, Colonel Maitland arrived from Beaufort, with the troops which had been stationed at that place.

As the French were in possession of the main channel by which the Savannah communicates with the sea, Colonel Maitland entered the town by a route which had been deemed impracticable. He came round by Dawfuskie, an island north of the mouth of the river, and landing in a deep marsh, drew his boats through it into the Savannah, above the place where the ships lay at anchor, and thence made his way by small parties into the town.

On receiving this reinforcement, the resolution was taken to defend the place to the last extremity; and, the next day, this determination was communicated to the Count D'Estaing.

After bringing up the heavy ordnance and stores from the fleet, the besieging army broke ground; and, by the first of October, had pushed their sap within three hundred yards of the abattis on the left of the British lines. Several batteries were opened on the besieged which played almost incessantly upon their works, but made no impression on them.

The situation of D'Estaing was becoming critical. More time had already been consumed on the coast of Georgia than he had supposed would be necessary for the destruction of the British force in that state. He became uneasy for the possessions of France in the West Indies, and apprehensive for the safety of the ships under his command. The naval officers remonstrated strenuously against longer exposing his fleet on an insecure coast, at a tempestuous season of the year, and urged the danger of being overtaken by a British squadron, when broken and scattered by a storm, with a degree of persevering earnestness which the Count found himself incapable of resisting.

In a few days the lines of the besiegers might have been carried by regular approaches, into the works of the besieged, which would have rendered the capture of the town and garrison inevitable. But D'Estaing declared that he could devote no more time to this object; and it only remained to raise the siege, or to attempt the works by storm. The latter part of the alternative was adopted.

On the left of the allied army, was a swampy hollow way which afforded a cover for troops advancing on the right flank of the besieged, to a point within fifty yards of their principal work. It was determined to march to the main attack along this hollow; and, at the same time, to direct feints against other parts of the lines.

On the morning of the 9th of October, before day, a heavy cannonade and bombardment were commenced from all the batteries, as preliminary to the assault. About three thousand five hundred French, and one thousand Americans, of whom between six and seven hundred were regulars, and the residue militia of Charleston, advanced in three columns, led by D'Estaing and Lincoln, aided by the principal officers of both nations, and made a furious assault on the British lines. Their reception was warmer than had been expected. The fire from the batteries of the besieged reached every part of the columns of the assailants which had emerged from the swamp, and did great execution. Yet the allied troops advanced with unabated ardour, passed through the abattis, crossed the ditch, and mounted the parapet. Both the French and Americans planted their standards on the walls, and were killed in great numbers, while endeavouring to force their way into the works. For about fifty minutes, the contest was extremely obstinate. At length, the columns of the assailants began to relax, and a pause was manifested on the assault.

In this critical moment, Major Glaziers, at the head of a body of grenadiers and marines, rushing suddenly from the lines, threw himself on those who had made their way into the redoubts, and drove them over the ditch and abattis into the hollow through which they had marched to the attack. It became apparent that farther perseverance could produce no advantage, and a retreat was ordered.

In this unsuccessful attempt, the French lost in killed and wounded, about seven hundred men. Among the latter, were the Count D'Estaing himself, Major General De Fontanges, and several other officers of distinction. The continental troops lost two hundred and thirty-four men, and the Charleston militia, who, though associated with them in danger, were more fortunate, had one captain killed, and six privates wounded.

The loss of the garrison was astonishingly small. In killed and wounded, it amounted only to fifty-five. So great was the advantage of the cover afforded by their works.

After this repulse, the Count D'Estaing announced to General Lincoln, his determination to raise the siege. The remonstrances of that officer were unavailing; and the removal of the heavy ordnance and stores was commenced. This being accomplished, both armies moved from their ground on the evening of the 18th of October. The Americans, recrossing the Savannah at Zubly's ferry, again encamped in South Carolina, and the French re-embarked.

Although the issue of this enterprise was the source of severe chagrin and mortification, the prudence of General Lincoln suppressed every appearance of dissatisfaction, and the armies separated with manifestations of reciprocal esteem.

The hopes which had brought the militia into the field being disappointed, they dispersed; and the affairs of the southern states wore a more gloomy aspect than at any former period.

On receiving intelligence of the situation of Lincoln, congress passed a resolution requesting General Washington to order the North Carolina troops, and such others as could be spared from the northern army, to the aid of that in the south; and assuring the states of South Carolina and Georgia of the attention of government to their preservation; but requesting them, for their own defence, to comply with the recommendations formerly made respecting the completion of their continental regiments, and the government of their militia while in actual service.

During these transactions in the south, the long meditated expedition against the Indians was prosecuted with success.

The largest division of the western army was to assemble at Wyoming, on the main branch of the Susquehanna, and General Sullivan expected to leave that place in the month of June. Such, however, were the delays in procuring provisions and military stores, that it was the last of July[1] before he could move from the place of rendezvous.

Another body of troops, designed to compose a part of the western army, had passed the winter on the Mohawk. On the 22d of August, these two divisions united, and the whole army, amounting to five thousand men, marched up the Tyoga, which led into the heart of the Indian country.

Such extensive and tedious preparations could not be made unobserved. The plan of operations contemplated by Sullivan seems to have been completely understood; and, notwithstanding the vast superiority of his force, the Indians determined to defend their country. They resolved to risk a general action for its preservation, and selected the ground for the conflict with judgment.

About a mile in front of Newtown, they collected their whole force, estimated by General Sullivan at fifteen hundred men, but by themselves at only eight hundred, commanded by the two Butlers, Grey, Johnson, M'Donald, and Brandt. Five companies of whites, calculated at two hundred men, were united with them. They had constructed a breast-work about half a mile in length, on a piece of rising ground. The right flank of this work was covered by the river, which, bending to the right, and winding round their rear, exposed only their front and left to an attack. On the left, was a high ridge nearly parallel to the general course of the river, terminating somewhat below the breast-work; and still farther to the left, was another ridge running in the same direction, and leading to the rear of the American army. The ground was covered with pine interspersed with low shrub-oaks, many of which, for the purpose of concealing their works, had been cut up and stuck in front of them, so as to exhibit the appearance of being still growing. The road, after crossing a deep brook at the foot of the hill, turned to the right, and ran nearly parallel to the breast-work, so as to expose the whole flank of the army to their fire, if it should advance without discovering their position.

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[1] While Sullivan was preparing to invade their country, the savages were not inactive. At the head of a small party of whites and Indians, Joseph Brandt fell upon the frontiers of New York, murdered several of the inhabitants, carried others into captivity, and burnt several houses. He was pursued by about one hundred and fifty militia, whom he drew into an ambuscade, and entirely defeated. A few days afterwards, Captain M'Donald, at the head of a small party, of whom a third were British, took a fort on the west branch of the Susquehanna, and made the garrison, amounting to thirty men, prisoners of war. The women and children, contrary to the usage of Indians, were permitted to retire into the settled country.—*Gordon.*

Parties communicating with each other were stationed on both hills, so as to fall on the right flank and rear of Sullivan, as soon as the action should commence.

About eleven in the morning of the 29th of August, this work was discovered by Major Par, who commanded the advance guard of the army; upon which, General Hand formed the light infantry in a wood, about four hundred yards distant from the enemy, and stood upon his ground until the main body should arrive. In the mean time, a continual skirmishing was kept up between Par's rifle corps, and small parties of Indians who sallied from their works, and suddenly retreated, apparently with the hope of being incautiously pursued.

Conjecturing that the hills on his right were occupied by the savages, Sullivan ordered General Poor to take possession of that which led into his rear, and, thence, to turn the left, and gain the rear, of the breast-work; while Hand, aided by the artillery, should attack in front. These orders were promptly executed. While the artillery played on the works, Poor pushed up the mountain, and a sharp conflict commenced, which was sustained for some time, with considerable spirit on both sides. Poor continued to advance rapidly, pressing the Indians before him at the point of the bayonet, and occasionally firing on them. They retreated from tree to tree, keeping up an irregular fire, until he gained the summit of the hill. Perceiving that their flank was completely uncovered by this movement, and that they were in danger of being surrounded, the savages abandoned their breast-work, and, crossing the river, fled with the utmost precipitation.

This victory cost the Americans about thirty men. The ascertained loss of the Indians was also inconsiderable. But they were so intimidated, that every idea of farther resistance was abandoned. As Sullivan advanced, they continued to retreat before him without harassing his main body, or even skirmishing with his detachments, except in a single instance.

He penetrated far into the heart of their country, which his parties scoured, and laid waste in every direction. Houses, corn-fields, gardens, and fruit trees, shared one common fate; and Sullivan executed strictly the severe but necessary orders he had received, to render the country completely uninhabitable for the present, and thus to compel the hostile Indians, by want of food, to remove to a greater distance.

The objects of the expedition being accomplished, Sullivan returned to Easton in Pennsylvania, having lost only forty men by sickness and the enemy.

The devastation of the country has been spoken of with some degree of disapprobation; but this sentiment is the result rather of an amiable disposition in the human mind to condemn whatever may have the appearance of tending to aggravate the miseries of war, than of reflection. Circumstances existed which reconciled to humanity this seeming departure from it. Great Britain possessed advantages which ensured a controlling influence over the Indians, and kept them in almost continual war with the United States. Their habitual ferocity seemed to have derived increased virulence from the malignity of the whites who had taken refuge among them; and there was real foundation for the opinion that an annual repetition of the horrors of Wyoming could be prevented only by disabling the savages from perpetrating them. No means in the power of the United States promised so certainly to effect this desirable object, as the removal of neighbours whose hostility could be diminished only by terror, and whose resentments were to be assuaged only by fear.

While Sullivan laid waste the country on the Susquehanna, another expedition under Colonel Brodhead, was carried on from Pittsburg up the Alleghany, against the Mingo, Munscy, and Seneca tribes. At the head of between six and seven hundred men, he advanced two hundred miles up the river, and destroyed the villages and cornfields on its head branches. Here too the Indians were unable to resist the invading army.

After one unsuccessful skirmish, they abandoned their villages to a destruction which was inevitable, and sought for personal safety in their woods.

On receiving the communications of General Sullivan, congress passed a vote approving his conduct, and that of his army. That approbation, however, seems not to have extended beyond his conduct in the Indian country. His demands for military stores for the expedition had been so high; in his conversations with his officers, he had so freely censured the government for its failure to comply with those demands; in general orders, he had so openly complained of inattention to the preparations necessary to secure the success of the enterprise; that considerable offence was given to several members of congress, and still more to the board of war. From the operation of these causes, when Sullivan, at the close of the campaign, complained of ill health, and offered, on that account, to resign his commission, the endeavours of his friends to obtain a vote requesting him to continue in the service, and permitting him to retire from actual duty until his health should be restored, were overruled; and his resignation was accepted. The resolution permitting him to resign was, however, accompanied with one thanking him for his past services.

Although these great exertions to terminate Indian hostility did not afford complete security to the western frontiers, they were attended with considerable advantages. The savages, though not subdued, were intimidated; and their incursions became less formidable, as well as less frequent.

The summer of 1779 passed away without furnishing any circumstance in America which could be supposed to have a material influence on the issue of the war. In Europe, however, an event took place which had been long anxiously expected, and was believed to be of decisive importance. Spain at length determined to make one common cause with France against Great Britain. It was supposed that the two powers would be able to obtain a complete ascendency at sea; and that their combined fleets would maintain a superiority on the American coast, as well as in Europe.

From the first determination of France to take part in the war, it appears to have been the earnest wish of the cabinet of Versailles to engage Spain likewise in the contest.

Her resentments against England, her solicitude to diminish the naval strength of that nation, and her wish to recover Jamaica, Gibraltar, and the Floridas, urged her to seize the fair occasion now offered of dismembering the British empire, and accomplishing these favourite objects. But her dread of the effect which the independence of the United States might produce on her own colonies, mingled with some apprehensions of danger from the contest she was about to provoke, had produced an appearance of irresolution, which rendered her future course, for a time, uncertain. In this conflict of opposite interests, the influence of the cabinet of Versailles, and the jealousy of the naval power of Britain, at length obtained the victory; and his Catholic Majesty determined to prevent the reannexation of the United States to their mother country; but to effect this object by negotiation rather than by the sword.

In pursuance of this pacific system, he offered his mediation to the belligerent powers. This proposition was readily accepted by France; but the minister of his Britannic Majesty evaded any explicit arrangements on the subject, while he continued to make general verbal declarations of the willingness of his sovereign to give peace to Europe under the mediation of his Catholic Majesty. In consequence of these declarations, the Spanish minister proposed a truce for a term of years, and that a congress of deputies from the belligerent powers should assemble at Madrid to adjust the terms of a permanent treaty; into which deputies from the United States were to be admitted, as the representatives of a sovereign nation. Although an explicit acknowledgment of their independence was not to be required, it was to be understood that they should be independent in fact, and should be completely separated from the British empire.

This negotiation was protracted to a considerable length; and in the mean time, all the address of the cabinet of London was used to detach either France or the United States from their alliance with each other. Notice of it was given to the American government by the minister of France at Philadelphia, as well as by Mr. Arthur Lee, one of their agents in Europe; and congress was repeatedly urged by the former, to furnish those who might be authorised to represent them in the conferences for a general treaty, with ample powers and instructions to conclude it. An extraordinary degree of solicitude was manifested to hasten the full powers, and to moderate the claims of the United States.

It seems to have been the policy of the cabinet of Versailles to exclude the American States from a share of the fisheries, and to limit their western boundary to the settlements then made. Either from a real apprehension that the war might be protracted should the United States insist on the acknowledgment of their independence as a preliminary to any treaty, or from an opinion that such preliminary acknowledgment would leave the terms of the treaty less under the control of France, and the American plenipotentiaries more masters of their own conduct, Monsieur Girard laboured to persuade congress to recede from that demand. If they could be independent in fact, he thought the form not worth contending for.[1]

While congress was employed in debating the instructions to their ministers, the negotiation was brought to a close. As Spain became prepared for hostilities, the offered mediation was pressed in such terms as to produce the necessity of either accepting or rejecting it. This drew from the cabinet of London a declaration that the independence of the United States was inadmissible; upon which his Catholic Majesty determined to take part in the war.

On the departure of his minister from London without taking leave, the British government issued letters of marque and reprisal against the vessels and subjects of the Spanish crown; and a powerful Spanish fleet, which had been preparing during the negotiation, was expedited, to co-operate with that of France. Yet the independence of the United States was not acknowledged, nor was their minister accredited. Despatches, giving notice of the hostilities meditated by his Catholic Majesty, were forwarded to Don Galvez, the governor of Louisiana, who collected a considerable military force at New Orleans, and reduced the settlements held by the British crown on the Mississippi, which had not been apprized of the war.

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[1] The author has seen notes taken by a member of congress, of communications made by Mr. Girard, when admitted to an audience, which avow these sentiments. The secret journals of congress sustain this statement.

Intelligence of this important event was given to congress while that body was deliberating on the instructions to their negotiators. It is not impossible that this information had some influence on those deliberations; and, rendering the American government less solicitous about the future conduct of Spain, diminished the motives for making territorial sacrifices to that power. Their ministers were ordered to make it a preliminary article to any negotiation, that Great Britain should agree to treat with the United States, as sovereign, free, and independent; and that their independence should be expressly assured and confirmed by the terms of the treaty itself.

That the United States might be enabled to avail themselves without further delays, of any occasion which might be presented for terminating the war, Mr. John Adams, who was already in Europe, was authorised to negotiate a treaty of peace, and a commercial treaty with Great Britain; and Mr. Jay, at that time president of congress, was appointed minister plenipotentiary to the court of Madrid, with instructions to insist on the free navigation of the Mississippi;—a claim to which Spain objected, and which was discountenanced by France.

As the campaign drew to a close without affording any solid foundation for the hope that the war was about to terminate, General Washington repeated those efforts which he had made so often and so unsuccessfully, to induce early preparations for the ensuing year. He submitted to the view of his government a detailed report of the whole army, which exhibited the alarming fact, that by the last of the following June, the terms of service of nearly one-half the men under his command would expire.

It was not the least considerable of the inconveniences attending the complex system of government then prevailing in the United States, that measures essential to the safety of the nation were never taken in season. Thus, when the time for raising the quotas of the respective states by voluntary enlistment had passed away, and the necessity of resorting to coercive means had become absolute, those means were so delayed, and so irregularly put in execution, that the terms of service of different portions of the army expired almost every month in the year; and raw troops, ignorant of the first rudiments of military duty, were introduced in the most critical moments of a campaign. Had timely and correspondent measures been taken by the states to raise their respective quotas by a specified time in the depth of winter, the recruits would have received the advantage of a few months training before they were brought into actual service, and the General, that of a certain uninterrupted force for each campaign. This course of proceeding had been continually recommended, and the recommendation had been as continually neglected.

"In the more early stages of the contest," said the Commander-in-chief to congress, in a letter of the 8th of November, "when men might have been enlisted for the war, no man, as my whole conduct, and the uniform tenor of my letters will evince, was ever more opposed to short enlistments than I was; and while there remained a prospect of obtaining recruits on a permanent footing in the first instance, as far as duty and a regard to my station would permit, I urged my sentiments in favour of it. But the prospect of keeping up an army by voluntary enlistments being changed, or at least standing on too precarious and uncertain a footing to depend on for the exigency of our affairs, I took the liberty in February, 1778, in a particular manner, to lay before the committee of arrangement then with the army at Valley Forge, a plan for an annual draught, as the surest and most certain, if not the only means left us, of maintaining the army on a proper and respectable ground. And, more and more confirmed in the propriety of this opinion by the intervention of a variety of circumstances, unnecessary to detail, I again took the freedom of urging the plan to the committee of conference in January last; and, having reviewed it in every point of light, and found it right, at least the best that has occurred to me, I hope I shall be excused by congress in offering it to them, and in time for carrying into execution for the next year; if they should conceive it necessary for the states to complete their quotas of troops.

"The plan I would propose is, that each state be informed by congress annually of the *real deficiency* of its troops, and called upon to make it up, or such less specific number as congress may think proper, by a draught. That the men draughted join the army by the first of January, and serve until the first of January in the succeeding year. That from the time the draughts join the army, the officers of the states from which they come, be authorised and directed to use their endeavours to enlist them for the war, under the bounties granted to the officers themselves, and to the recruits, by the act of the 23d of January, 1779, viz.: ten dollars to the officer for each recruit, and two hundred to the recruits themselves. That all state, county, and town bounties to draughts, if practicable, be entirely abolished, on account of the uneasiness and disorders they create among the soldiery, the desertions they produce, and for other reasons which will readily occur. That on or before the first of October annually, an abstract, or return, similar to the present one, be transmitted to congress, to enable them to make their requisitions to each state with certainty and precision. This I would propose as a general plan to be pursued; and I am persuaded that this, or one nearly similar to it, will be found the best now in our power, as it will be attended with the least expense to the public, will place the service on the footing of order and certainty, and will be the only one that can advance the general interest to any great extent."

These representations on the part of the Commander-in-chief were not more successful than those which had before been made. Although the best dispositions existed in congress, the proceedings of that body were unavoidably slow; and the difficulty of effecting a concert of measures among thirteen sovereign states, was too great to be surmounted. In consequence of these radical defects in the system itself, the contributions of men made by the states continued to be irregular, uncertain, and out of season; and the army could never acquire that consistency and stability, which would have resulted from an exact observance of the plan so often recommended.

On receiving information of the disaster which had been sustained by the allied arms at Savannah, Sir Henry Clinton resumed his plan of active operations against the southern states. A large embarkation took place soon after that event had been announced to him, which sailed from the Hook towards the end of December. The troops were commanded by himself in person, and the fleet by Admiral Arbuthnot. The defence of New York and its dependencies were entrusted to General Knyphausen.

The preparations made in New York for some distant enterprise were immediately communicated by his faithful intelligencers to General Washington, who conjectured the object, and hastened the march of the troops designed to reinforce General Lincoln.

The season for action in a northern climate being over, the General turned his attention to the distribution of his troops in winter quarters. Habit had familiarised the American army to the use of huts constructed by themselves; and both officers and men were content to pass the winter in a hutted camp. In disposing of the troops, therefore, until the time for action should return, wood and water, a healthy situation, convenience for supplies of provisions, stations which would enable them to cover the country, and to defend particular positions, were the objects taken into consideration, and were all to be consulted.

With a view to these various circumstances, the army was thrown into two great divisions. The northern was to be commanded by General Heath; and its chief object was the security of West Point, and of the posts on the North River, as low as King's ferry. Subordinate to this was the protection of the country on the Sound, and down the Hudson the neighbourhood of Kingsbridge. The other and principal division under the immediate command of General Washington, was put under cover, late in December, in the neighbourhood of Morristown.

CHAPTER XVII

THE departure of the French fleet produced a sudden change in the prospects of the southern states. The sanguine hopes which had been entertained of the recovery of Georgia, gave place to gloomy and well founded apprehensions for South Carolina. 1780.

The facility with which General Prevost had passed through the state, and the assurances he had received of the indisposition of a large portion of the people to defend themselves, disclosed too certainly the true situation of the country, not to convince all discerning men that a real attempt at conquest would be made the ensuing year. General Lincoln perceived the approaching danger, without being able to provide against it. His power, as a military commander, was too limited, and his influence on the government of the state too weak, to draw forth even the means it possessed in time for its protection.

Though the preservation of its metropolis was of vast importance to the state, no preparations were making to put it in a condition to stand a siege. The forts on the islands were in ruins, and the works across the neck remained unfinished. The representations made on this subject to the governor by General Lincoln were not disregarded; but from some defect in the existing law, the executive found it impracticable to obtain labour for these interesting objects.

Admiral Arbuthnot arrived at Savannah on the 31st of January. One of his transports, which had been separated from the fleet in a storm, was brought into Charleston harbour on the 23d of that month; and the prisoners gave the first certain intelligence that the expedition from New York was destined against the capital of South Carolina.

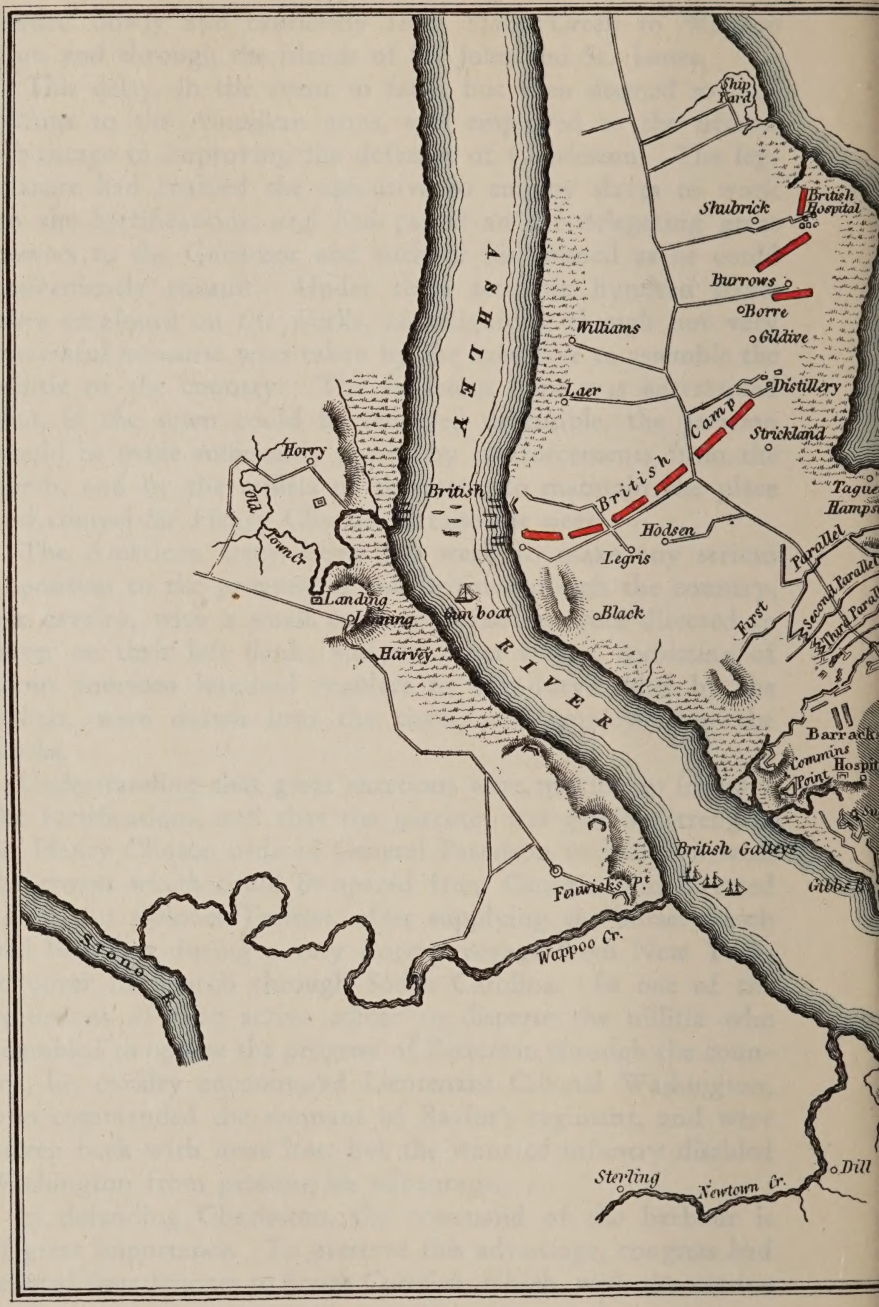
Before the middle of February, the fleet entered the harbour, or inlet, of North Edisto; and landed the troops without opposition on St. John's Island. A part of the fleet was sent round to blockade the harbour of Charleston, while the army proceeded slowly and cautiously from Stono Creek to Wappoo Cut, and through the islands of St. John and St. James.

This delay, in the event so fatal, but then deemed so propitious to the American arms, was employed to the utmost advantage in improving the defences of Charleston. The legislature had enabled the executive to employ slaves to work on the fortifications; and had passed an act delegating great powers to the Governor and such of his council as he could conveniently consult. Under these acts, six hundred slaves were employed on the works, and vigorous, though not very successful measures were taken by the executive to assemble the militia of the country. The fallacious hope was entertained that, if the town could be rendered defensible, the garrison would be made sufficiently strong by reinforcements from the north, and by the militia of the state, to maintain the place and compel Sir Henry Clinton to raise the siege.

The American army being too weak to make any serious opposition to the progress of the British through the country, the cavalry, with a small corps of infantry, were directed to hover on their left flank; and the other troops, consisting of about fourteen hundred regulars fit for duty, aided by the militia, were drawn into the town, and employed on the works.

Understanding that great exertions were making to improve the fortifications, and that the garrison was gaining strength, Sir Henry Clinton ordered General Patterson to join him with the troops which could be spared from Georgia, and directed Lieutenant Colonel Tarlton, after supplying the horses which had been lost during a very stormy voyage from New York, to cover his march through South Carolina. In one of the excursions of that active officer to disperse the militia who assembled to oppose the progress of Patterson through the country, his cavalry encountered Lieutenant Colonel Washington, who commanded the remnant of Baylor's regiment, and were driven back with some loss; but the want of infantry disabled Washington from pressing his advantage.

In defending Charleston, the command of the harbour is of great importance. To preserve this advantage, congress had ordered four frigates to South Carolina, which, with the marine


ASHLEY
RIVER
Ship Yard
British Hospital
Shubrick
Burrows
Borre
Gildive
Williams
Laer
Distillery
Strickland
British Camp
Tague
Hampst
Horry
Old Town Cr.
British
Hodsen
Legris
Parallel
Second Parallel
Third Paral
First
Landing
Lemming
Gun boat
Black
Harvey
Barrack
Commins Point
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Gibbs
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Wappoo Cr.
Stono R.
Sterling
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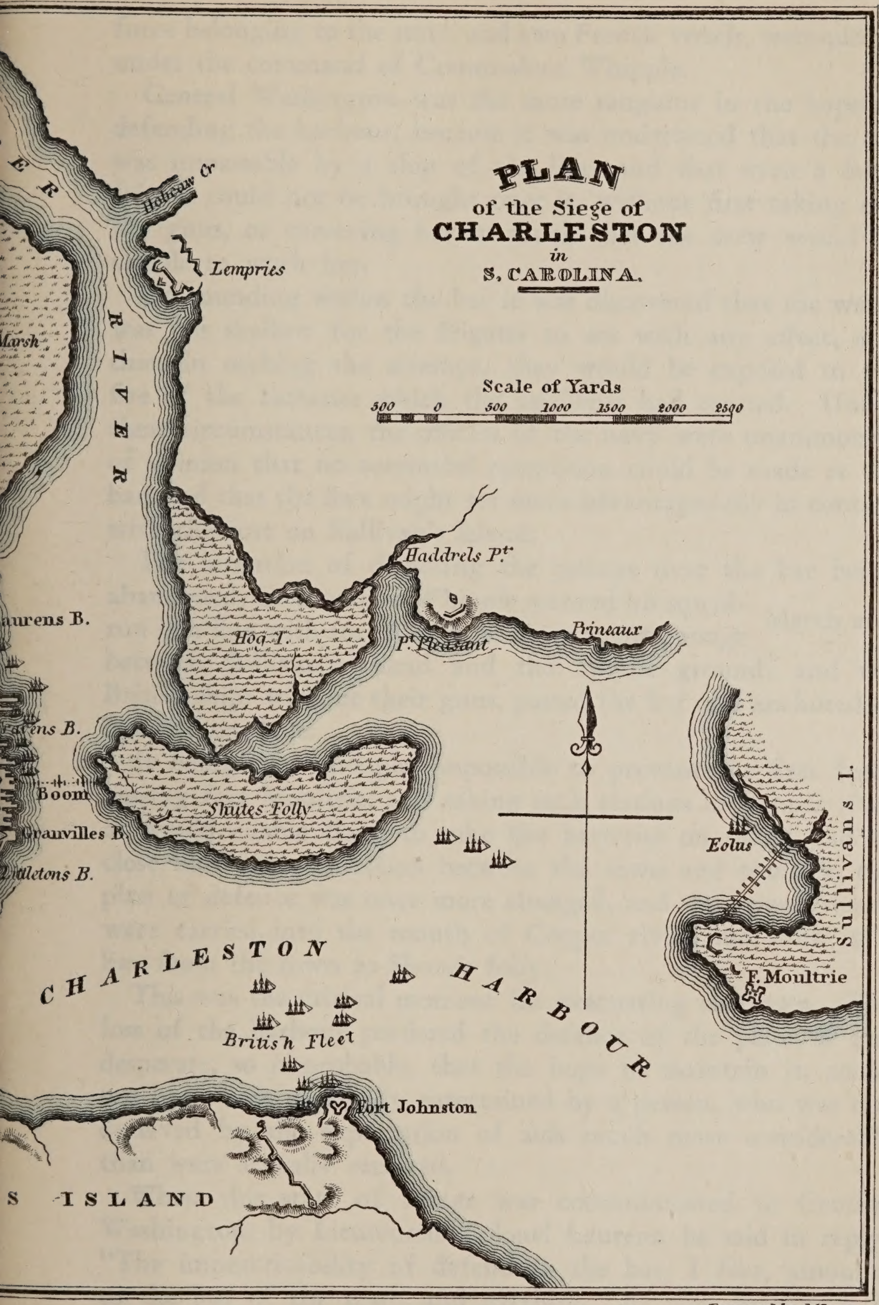
PLAN
of the Siege of
CHARLESTON
in
S. CAROLINA.
Scale of Yards
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Eolus
Sullivans I.
F. Moultrie
CHARLESTON HARBOUR
British Fleet
Fort Johnston
S ISLAND

Engraved by J. Yeager.

force belonging to the state, and two French vessels, were placed under the command of Commodore Whipple.

General Washington was the more sanguine in the hope of defending the harbour, because it was understood that the bar was impassable by a ship of the line, and that even a large frigate could not be brought over it, without first taking out her guns, or careening her so much that the crew would be unable to work her.

On sounding within the bar it was discovered that the water was too shallow for the frigates to act with any effect, and that, in making the attempt, they would be exposed to the fire of the batteries which the assailants had erected. Under these circumstances, the officers of the navy were unanimously of opinion that no successful opposition could be made at the bar, and that the fleet might act more advantageously in concert with the fort on Sullivan's Island.

The intention of disputing the passage over the bar being abandoned, Commodore Whipple moored his squadron in a line with fort Moultrie, in a narrow passage between Sullivan's Island and the middle ground; and the British ships without their guns, passed the bar and anchored in five fathom hole.

March 20.

It being now thought impossible to prevent the fleet from passing fort Moultrie, and taking such stations in Cooper river as would enable them to rake the batteries on shore, and to close that communication between the town and country, the plan of defence was once more changed, and the armed vessels were carried into the mouth of Cooper river, and sunk in a line from the town to Shute's folly.

This was the critical moment for evacuating the town. The loss of the harbour rendered the defence of the place, if not desperate, so improbable, that the hope to maintain it, could not have been rationally entertained by a person, who was not deceived by the expectation of aids much more considerable than were actually received.

When this state of things was communicated to General Washington, by Lieutenant Colonel Laurens, he said in reply, "The impracticability of defending the bar, I fear, amounts to the loss of the town and garrison. At this distance it is impossible to judge for you. I have the greatest confidence in General Lincoln's prudence; but it really appears to me, that the propriety of attempting to defend the town, depended on the probability of defending the bar; and that when this ceased, the attempt ought to have been relinquished. In this, however, I suspend a definitive judgment, and wish you to consider what I say as confidential." Unfortunately, this letter did not arrive in time to influence the conduct of the besieged.

Having crossed Ashley river, Sir Henry Clinton moved down the neck, and, on the night of the first of April, broke ground within eight hundred yards of the American lines.

The defences of Charleston had been constructed under the direction of a Mr. Laumay, a French gentleman in the American service; and, although not calculated to resist a regular siege, were far from being contemptible.

While the besiegers were employed on their first parallel, the garrison received a considerable reinforcement. General Woodford, who had marched from Morristown in December, entered the town with the old continental troops of the Virginia line, now reduced to seven hundred effectives. General Hogan, with the line of North Carolina, had arrived before him. The garrison consisted of rather more than two thousand regular troops, of about one thousand North Carolina militia, and of the citizens of Charleston. The exertions of the Governor to bring in the militia of South Carolina had not succeeded.

By the 9th of April, Sir Henry Clinton completed his first parallel extending across the neck, and mounted his guns in battery. His works formed an oblique line, from six to seven hundred yards distant from those of the besieged. About the same time, Admiral Arbuthnot passed Sullivan's island, under a heavy and well directed fire from fort Moultrie, then commanded by Colonel Pinckney, and anchored under James' island near fort Johnson, just out of gunshot of the batteries of the town.

Being now in complete possession of the harbour, the British General and Admiral sent a joint summons to General Lincoln, demanding the surrender of the town, to which he returned this firm and modest answer, "Sixty days have elapsed since it has been known that your intentions against this town were hostile, in which, time has been afforded to abandon it; but duty and inclination point to the propriety of supporting it to the last extremity."

On receiving this answer, the besiegers opened their batteries, but seemed to rely principally on proceeding by sap quite into the American lines.

About this time, the Governor with half the members of the council, went into the country, in the hope of collecting a respectable force in the rear, and on the left flank of the besieging army. The Lieutenant Governor, and the other members of the council remained in town.

Hitherto, Sir Henry Clinton had not extended his lines north of Charleston neck, and the communication of the garrison with the country northeast of Cooper remained open. The American cavalry, under the command of General Huger, had passed that river, and was stationed in the neighbourhood of Monk's corner, about thirty miles above Charleston. As an additional security to this, the only remaining communication, two posts of militia were established, one between the Cooper and the Santee rivers, to which the Governor repaired in person; and another at a ferry on the Santee, where boats were to be collected for the purpose of facilitating the passage of the American army over that river, should it be deemed adviseable to evacuate the town.

Such importance was attached to this object, that Lincoln, after Woodford had entered Charleston, detached a part of his regular troops, to throw up some works about nine miles above the town, on Wando, the eastern branch of Cooper, and on Lamprere's point. The militia, it was hoped, though unwilling to enter Charleston, might be drawn to these posts.

After the fleet had entered the harbour, Sir Henry Clinton turned his attention to the country on the east of Cooper, to acquire the possession of which it was necessary to disable the American cavalry. This service was committed to Lieutenant Colonel Webster, who detached Tarlton with the horse and a corps of infantry to execute it. He succeeded completely. Conducted in the night through unfrequented paths to the American videttes, he entered the camp with them, killed and took about one hundred men, and dis-

April 14.

persed the residue, who saved themselves on foot in a swamp. Near fifty wagons loaded with military stores, and about four hundred horses, fell into the hands of the victors.

This decisive blow gave Lieutenant Colonel Webster possession of the whole country between Cooper and Wando; and closed the only route by which the garrison could have retreated.

The besiegers had now commenced their second parallel, and it became every day more apparent that the town must ultimately yield to their regular approaches. An evacuation was proposed, and Lincoln is understood to have been in favour of that measure; but the remonstrances of the principal inhabitants, who entreated him not to abandon them to the fury of a disappointed enemy, added to the great difficulty which must attend such an attempt, especially when opposed by the civil government, deterred him from adopting the only course which afforded even a probability, by saving his army, of saving the southern states.

Soon after the affair at Monk's corner, Sir Henry Clinton received a reinforcement of three thousand men from New York. This addition to his strength enabled him to detach largely to the aid of Lieutenant Colonel Webster, after which Lord Cornwallis took command of the troops on that side of Cooper river.

April 20.

Upon this change of situation, Lincoln called another council of war. Notwithstanding the multiplied difficulties attending an evacuation of Charleston, he appears to have been still inclined to it. But a number of fortunate circumstances must have concurred to render a retreat possible; and the attempt was effectually prevented by the opposition of the civil government. The opinion seems to have prevailed, that the escape of the garrison would be followed by the destruction of the town, and the ruin of its inhabitants.

The council advised that a capitulation should be proposed, and that the town should be surrendered on condition that the garrison should be at liberty still to bear arms, and that the inhabitants should be secured in their persons and property. These propositions being rejected, hostilities recommenced.

The besiegers had completed their second parallel, and had begun the third, when Colonel Henderson made a vigorous sally on their right, which was attended with some success. That this was the only sortie made during the siege, is to be ascribed to the weakness of the garrison. General Lincoln deemed it necessary to reserve all his strength to man his lines in the event of an assault, or to force a retreat, should he determine to evacuate the city.

In this state of things, General Du Portail, who had been directed to join the southern army, was conducted by secret ways into the town. He perceived the impossibility of defending the place, and repeated the proposition for attempting a retreat. This proposition was again rejected; and it only remained to defer the surrender as long as possible, in the vain hope that some fortunate occurrence might bring relief.

Every day diminished this hope, and added to the difficulties of the besieged. The admiral took possession of Mount Pleasant, which induced the immediate evacuation of Lamprere's point; soon after which the garrison of fort Moultrie, amounting to about two hundred men,[1] surrendered themselves prisoners of war. On the same day, the cavalry which had escaped the disaster at Monk's corner, and had been reassembled under the command of Colonel White, of New Jersey, was again surprised and defeated by Lieutenant Colonel Tarlton at Lanneau's ferry. May 7.

The investment of the town was now complete; the advances were rapid; and it became obvious that the place could be defended only a few days longer. The besiegers had finished their third parallel; and by a sap pushed to the dam that supplied the canal with water, had drained it in many places to the bottom. The garrison, fatigued and worn out with constant duty, was too weak to man the lines sufficiently; their guns were almost all dismounted; most of the embrasures demolished; their shot nearly expended; their provisions, with the exception of a few cows, entirely consumed; and the approaches of the besiegers so near, that their marksmen frequently picked off the men from the guns, and killed [2] any person who showed himself above the works.

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[1] After the fleet passed the fort, Colonel Pinckney and a part of the garrison were withdrawn.

[2] Colonel Parker and Captain Peyton, two valuable officers from Virgina, fell in this manner.

In this state of things, the garrison was summoned, a second time, to surrender; on which a council was again called, which advised a capitulation. In pursuance of this advice, General Lincoln proposed terms which were refused, and hostilities recommenced.

The besiegers now advanced their works in front of their third parallel, crossed the canal, pushed a double sap to the inside of the abattis, and approached within twenty yards of the American works. Preparations for an assault by sea and land were making. With less than three thousand men, many of whom were militia, lines three miles in extent were to be defended against the flower of the British army, assisted by a powerful maritime force. Convinced that success was not possible, the citizens prepared a petition to General Lincoln, entreating him to surrender the town on the terms which had been offered by the besiegers.

This proposition was made and accepted; and the capitulation was signed on the 12th of May.

The town, and all public stores were surrendered. The garrison, as well the citizens who had borne arms as the continental troops, militia, and sailors, were to be prisoners of war. The garrison were to march out of town, and to deposite their arms in front of their works; but their drums were not to beat a British march, nor their colours to be reversed. The militia were to retire to their homes on parole, and their persons and property, as well as the persons and property of the inhabitants of the town, to be secure while they strictly adhered to their paroles.

These terms being agreed on, the garrison laid down their arms, and General Leslie was appointed to take possession of the town.

The defence of Charleston was obstinate, but not bloody. The besiegers conducted their approaches with great caution; and the besieged, too weak to hazard repeated sorties, kept within their lines. The loss on both sides was nearly equal. That of the British was seventy-six killed and one hundred and eighty-nine wounded; and that of the Americans, excluding the inhabitants of the town not bearing arms, was ninety-two killed, and one hundred and forty-eight wounded.

From the official returns made to Sir Henry Clinton by his deputy adjutant general, the number of prisoners, exclusive of sailors, amounted to five thousand six hundred and eighteen men. This report, however, presents a very incorrect view of the real strength of the garrison. It includes every male adult inhabitant of the town. The precise number of privates in the continental regiments, according to the report made to congress by General Lincoln, was one thousand nine hundred and seventy-seven; of whom five hundred were in the hospital.

The unfortunate are generally condemned; and the loss of the garrison of Charleston so maimed the force, and palsied the operations of the American government in the south, that censure was unsparingly bestowed on the officer who had undertaken and persevered in the defence of that place. In his justificatory letter to the Commander-in-chief, General Lincoln detailed at large the motives of his conduct, and stated the testimony on which those delusive hopes of substantial assistance were founded, which tempted him to remain in town, until the unexpected arrival of the reinforcement from New York deprived him of the power to leave it.

The importance of that great mart of the southern states, which had become the depot for the country to a considerable extent around it; the magazines and military stores there collected, which, from the difficulty of obtaining wagons, could not be removed; the ships of war, which must be sacrificed should the town be evacuated; the intention of congress that the place should be defended; the assurances received that the garrison should be made up to ten thousand men, of whom nearly one half would be regular troops; the anxious solicitude of the government of South Carolina; all concurred to induce the adoption of a measure which, in its consequences, was extremely pernicious to the United States. In the opinion of those who were best enabled to judge of his conduct, General Lincoln appears to have been completely justified. The confidence of his government, and the esteem of the Commander-in-chief, sustained no diminution.

Sir Henry Clinton was aware of the impression his conquest had made, and of the value of the first moments succeeding it.

Calculating on the advantages to be derived from showing an irresistible force in various parts of the country at the same time, he made three large detachments from his army;—the first and most considerable, towards the frontiers of North Carolina; the second to pass the Saluda to Ninety-Six; and the third up the Savannah towards Augusta.

Lord Cornwallis, who commanded the northern detachment, received intelligence, soon after passing the Santee, that Colonel Buford, with about four hundred men, was retreating in perfect security towards North Carolina. He detached Lieutenant Colonel Tarlton with his legion, the infantry being mounted, in pursuit of this party. That officer, by making a movement of near one hundred miles in two days, overtook Buford, in a line of march, at the Waxhaws, and demanded a surrender on the terms which had been granted to the garrison of Charleston. This was refused. While the flags were passing, Tarlton continued to make his dispositions for the assault, and, the instant the truce was over, his cavalry made a furious charge on the Americans, who had received no orders to engage, and who seem to have been uncertain whether to defend themselves or not. In this state of dismay and confusion, some fired on the assailants, while others threw down their arms and begged for quarter. None was given. Colonel Buford escaped with a few cavalry; and about one hundred infantry, who were in advance, saved themselves by flight; but the regiment was almost demolished. Tarlton, in his official report, says that one hundred and thirteen were killed on the spot, one hundred and fifty so badly wounded as to be incapable of being moved, and fifty-three were brought away as prisoners. The loss of the British was five killed and fourteen wounded.

Tarlton gives a very different account of the circumstances which preceded this massacre. He says that the demand for a surrender was made long before Buford was overtaken, and was answered by a defiance; that, on overtaking him, the British vanguard made prisoners of a serjeant and four light dragoons, in the presence of the two commanders, who immediately prepared for action; that as he advanced to the charge, when within fifty paces, the American infantry presented, and were commanded by their officers to retain their fire until the British cavalry should be nearer.[1]

The American officers who survived the carnage of the day, generally assert that flags passed after being overtaken, that they had received no orders from Colonel Buford when the charge was made, and that the fire of their troops was retained until the enemy was upon them, because they did not think themselves authorised to give it. The facts that Buford's field pieces were not discharged, and that the loss was so very unequal, are not to be reconciled with the idea of deliberate preparation for battle, and justify the belief that the statement made by the American officers is correct.

After the defeat by Buford, scarcely the semblance of opposition remained in South Carolina and Georgia. The military force employed by congress was nearly destroyed; the spirit of resistance seemed entirely broken; and a general disposition to submit to the victor displayed itself in almost every part of the country.

The two other detachments saw no appearance of an enemy. They received the submission of the inhabitants, who either became neutral by giving their paroles, not to bear arms against his Britannic Majesty, or took the oaths of allegiance, and resumed the character of British subjects.

To keep up this disposition, garrisons were posted in different stations, and a series of measures was pursued for the purpose of settling the civil affairs of the province, and of giving stability to the conquest which had been made.

So entirely did the present aspect of affairs convince Sir Henry Clinton of the complete subjugation of the state, and of the favourable disposition of the people towards the British government, that he ventured to issue a proclamation, in which he discharged the militia who were prisoners from their paroles, with the exception of those who were taken in Charleston and fort Moultrie, and restored them

June 3.

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[1] Lieutenant Bowyer, an American officer who was in the engagement, near the person of Colonel Buford, in a letter which the author has lately seen, states this affair in a manner not much conflicting with the statement made of it by Colonel Tarlton.

to all the rights and duties of British subjects; declaring, at the same time, that such of them as should neglect to return to their allegiance, should be considered and treated as enemies and rebels.

This proclamation disclosed to the inhabitants their real situation. It proved that a state of neutrality was not within their reach; that the evils of war were unavoidable; that they must arrange themselves on the one side or the other; and that the only alternative presented to them was, to drive the enemy out of their country, or take up arms against their countrymen.

With the most sanguine hopes that the southern states would be re-united to the British empire, Sir Henry Clinton embarked for New York, leaving about four thousand British troops in South Carolina, under the command of Lord Cornwallis. June 5.

His lordship found it necessary to suspend the expedition he had meditated against North Carolina. The impossibility of supporting an army in that state before harvest, as well as the intense heat of the season, required this delay. His first care was to distribute his troops through South Carolina and the upper parts of Georgia, so as to promote the great and immediate objects of enlisting the young men who were willing to join his standard, of arranging the plan of a militia, and of collecting magazines at convenient places.

In the mean time, he despatched emissaries to his friends in North Carolina, to inform them of the necessary delay of his expedition into their country, and to request them to attend to their harvest, collect provisions, and remain quiet until late in August or early in September, when the King's troops would be ready to enter the province.

The impatience of the royalists, stimulated by the triumph of their friends in a neighbouring state, and by the necessary severities of a vigilant government, could not be restrained by this salutary counsel. Anticipating the immediate superiority of their party, they could not brook the authority exercised over them, and broke out into premature and ill concerted insurrections, which were vigorously encountered, and generally suppressed. One body of them, however, amounting to about eight hundred men, led by Colonel Bryan, marched down the east side of the Yadkin to a British post at the Cheraws, whence they proceeded to Camden.

Having made his dispositions, and fixed on Camden as the place for his principal magazines, Cornwallis left the command of the frontiers to Lord Rawdon, and retired to Charleston for the purpose of making those farther arrangements of a civil nature, which the state of affairs and the interest of his sovereign might require.

His lordship, as well as Sir Henry Clinton, seems to have supposed the state of South Carolina to be as completely subdued in sentiment as in appearance. Impatient to derive active aids from the new conquest, his measures were calculated to admit of no neutrality. For some time these measures seemed to succeed, and professions of loyalty were made in every quarter. But under this imposing exterior, lurked a mass of concealed discontent, to which every day furnished new ailment, and which waited only for a proper occasion to show itself.

The people of the lower parts of South Carolina, though far from being united, were generally attached to the revolution, and had entered into the war with zeal. They were conducted by a high spirited and intelligent gentry, who ardently sought independence as a real and permanent good.

Several causes had combined to suspend the operation of this sentiment. Many of their leaders were prisoners; and the brilliant successes of the British arms had filled numbers with despair. Others were sensible of the inutility of present resistance; and a still greater number, fatigued and harassed with militia duty, were willing to withdraw from the conflict, and, as spectators, to await its issue. To compel these men to share the burdens of the war, was to restore them to their former friends.

Late in March, General Washington had obtained the consent of congress to reinforce the southern army with the troops of Maryland and Delaware, and with the first regiment of artillery. This detachment was to be commanded by the Baron De Kalb, a German veteran who had engaged early in the service of the United States.

Such, however, was the deranged state of American finances, and such the depression of public credit, that these troops could not be put immediately in motion. They were at length embarked at the Head of Elk, and conveyed by water to Petersburg, in Virginia, whence they marched towards South Carolina. Their progress was delayed by that difficulty of obtaining subsistence which had induced Lord Cornwallis to suspend the invasion of North Carolina until harvest should be gathered. No preparations having been made for them, they were reduced to the necessity of spreading themselves over the country in small detachments to collect corn, and grind it for their daily food. In this manner they proceeded through the upper parts of North Carolina to Deep river, and encamped near Buffalo ford in July. At this place the Baron halted for a few days, in some uncertainty respecting his future course.[1]

The militia of North Carolina, commanded by General Caswell, were beyond the Pedee, on the road to Camden, and had nearly consumed the scanty supplies which could be gleaned from a country that was far from being productive. The Baron was meditating on a plan for leaving the direct road and moving up the country to the fertile banks of the Yadkin, when the approach of Major General Gates was announced by the arrival of his aid-de-camp, Major Armstrong.[1]

Aware of the danger to which the loss of Charleston had exposed that part of the confederacy, congress deemed it of the utmost importance to select a general for that department, in whom great military talents should be combined with that weight of character which might enable him to draw out the resources of the country. They turned their eyes on Gates;[2] and sanguine hopes were entertained that the conqueror of Burgoyne would prove the saviour of the southern states. On the 13th of June, he was called to the command in the southern department, and was directed to repair immediately to the army. He entered, without loss of time, on the duties of his station; and, on the 25th of July, reached the camp, where he was received by the Baron De Kalb with the utmost cordiality and respect.

The approach of this army, and the information that great exertions were making in Virginia to augment it, revived the hopes of South Carolina, and brought again into action a spirit supposed to be extinguished. The British troops having occupied the north-western parts of the state, the most active friends of the revolution in that quarter had fled from their homes, and sought an asylum in North Carolina and Virginia. As the discontents of their countrymen increased, and the prospect of being supported by regular troops brightened, a small body of these exiles, amounting to less than two hundred, assembled together, and choosing Colonel Sumpter, an old continental officer, for their chief, entered South Carolina. They skirmished with the royal militia and small corps of regulars on the frontiers, sometimes successfully, and always with the active courage of men fighting for the recovery of their property. The followers of Sumpter were soon augmented to six hundred men; and a disposition once more to take up arms showed itself in various parts of the state. Some corps of militia, which had been embodied under the authority of Lord Cornwallis, deserted his standard, and joined their countrymen. Perceiving this change of temper, the British general thought it necessary to draw in his out-posts, and to collect his troops into larger bodies.

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[1] Journal of Colonel Williams.

[2] This appointment was made without consulting the Commander-in-chief. He had determined, if consulted, to recommend General Greene.

On taking command of the southern army, General Gates directed the troops to hold themselves in readiness to march at a moment's warning; and, on the morning of the 27th, put the whole in motion. Disregarding the judicious remonstrances which were made to him against pursuing the direct road, he determined on taking the nearest route to the advanced post of the British on Lynch's creek, a few miles from Camden. The motives assigned by himself for passing through this barren country were, the necessity of uniting with Caswell, who had evaded the orders repeatedly given him to join the army, the danger of dispiriting the troops, and intimidating the people of the country, by pursuing a route not leading directly towards the enemy, and the assurances he had received that supplies would overtake him, and would be prepared for him on the road.

These assurances were not fulfilled; and, the country being still more barren than had been anticipated, the distress of the army was extreme. The soldiers subsisted on a few lean cattle found in the woods, and a very scanty supply of green corn and peaches. Encouraged by the example of their officers, who shared all their sufferings, and checked occasional murmurs, they struggled through these difficulties, and, after effecting a junction with General Caswell and with Lieutenant Colonel Porterfield,[1] the army reached Clermont, sometimes called Rugely's mills, on the 13th of August. Possession was taken of this place without any opposition from Lord Rawdon, who, on the approach of the American army, drew in his out-posts, and assembled all his forces at Camden.[2]

The day after the arrival of Gates at Clermont, he was joined by seven hundred militia from Virginia, commanded by Brigadier General Stevens, an officer of considerable merit, who, during the campaigns of 1777 and 1778, had commanded a continental regiment. On the same day, an express arrived from Colonel Sumpter, with information that an escort of clothing, ammunition, and other stores for the garrison at Camden, was on the way from Ninety-Six, and must pass the Wateree at a ferry about a mile from Camden, which was covered by a small redoubt on the opposite side of the river. One hundred regular infantry with two brass field-pieces, were immediately detached to join Colonel Sumpter, who was ordered to reduce the redoubt, and to intercept the convoy.[3]

To attract the attention of the garrison in Camden, and thus co-operate with the expedition under Sumpter, it was determined in a council of general officers to put the army in motion that evening, and to take a post about seven miles from Camden with a deep creek in front.

The sick, the heavy baggage, and the military stores were ordered under a guard to Waxhaws,[4] and the army was directed to be in readiness to march precisely at ten in the evening in the following order.

Colonel Armand's legion composed the van. Porterfield's light infantry, reinforced by a company of picked men from Stevens's brigade, covered the right flank of the legion; while Major Armstrong's light infantry of North Carolina militia, reinforced in like manner from Caswell's division, covered the left. The Maryland division, followed by the North Carolina and Virginia militia, with the artillery, composed the main body and rear guard; and the volunteer cavalry were equally distributed on the flanks of the baggage.

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[1] This valuable officer was pressing forward to Charleston when that place surrendered. Continuing to advance, he was within one day's march of Colonel Buford, when that officer was defeated. Colonel Porterfield still remained on the frontiers of the Carolinas; and had the address not only to avoid the fate of every other corps sent to the relief of Charleston, but to subsist his men; and keep up the semblance of holding that part of South Carolina. [2] Journal of Colonel Williams.

[3] Colonel Williams says these orders were not executed.

[4] Journal of Colonel Williams.

In the event of an attack in front by the British cavalry, the infantry on the flanks were directed to march up, and to continue their fire on the assailants. It was supposed they would enable Colonel Armand to resist the shock; and his orders were positive to maintain his ground against the cavalry, whatever their numbers might be.[1]

At the time of communicating these orders to Colonel Otho H. Williams, the Deputy Adjutant General, Gates, showed him a rough estimate of the army, making it upwards of seven thousand. Convinced that this estimate was exaggerated, Colonel Williams availed himself of his means of information to make an abstract of the whole, which he presented to the general, and which exhibited exactly three thousand and fifty-two in the column of present fit for duty, of whom more than two-thirds were militia. Gates expressed some surprise at the numbers, but said, "there are enough for our purpose," and directed the orders to be issued to the army. About ten at night, the line of march was taken up, and the army had advanced about half way to Camden, when a firing commenced in front.[2]

Intelligence of the approach of the American army, and of the defection of the country between Pedee and the Black river, had been communicated to Lord Cornwallis, and had induced him to hasten in person to Camden, which place he reached the day Gates arrived at Clermont.

The British army did not much exceed two thousand men, of whom about nineteen hundred were regulars; but, as the whole country was rising, Lord Cornwallis apprehended that every day would strengthen his enemy, and therefore determined to attack him in his camp; hoping, by a prompt execution of this resolution, to surprise him. By one of those caprices of fortune on which great events often depend, he marched from Camden to attack Gates in Clermont, at the very hour that Gates had chosen to move his forces from that place towards Camden.[1]

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[1] Journal of Colonel Williams. [2] *Ibid.*

About half past two in the morning, the advanced parties of the hostile armies, to their mutual surprise, met in the woods, and began to skirmish with each other. Aug. 16. Some of Armand's cavalry being wounded by the first fire, threw the others into disorder, and the whole recoiled so suddenly that the first Maryland regiment, composing the front of the column was broken, and the whole line thrown into consternation. From this first impression, the raw troops never recovered. The light infantry, however, particularly Porterfield's corps, behaved so well as to check the advance of the British. Unfortunately, their gallant commander received a mortal wound, which compelled him to leave his regiment. Yet a part of it kept its ground; and, with the aid of the legion infantry, stopped the British van; upon which order was restored to the American army.

The officers were immediately employed in forming a line of battle in front. The Maryland division, including the troops of Delaware, were on the right, the North Carolina militia in the centre, and the Virginia militia on the left.

In this rencounter some prisoners were made, from one of whom Colonel Williams drew the information that the British army, consisting of near three thousand men, commanded by Lord Cornwallis in person, was in full march five or six hundred yards in front. This intelligence was immediately communicated to General Gates, who had supposed Lord Cornwallis to be still in Charleston. The general officers were asssembled in the rear of the line, and this information submitted to them. After a short silence, Stevens said, "Gentlemen, is it not too late to do anything but fight?" No other advice being given, General Gates, who seems to have been himself disposed to risk a battle, directed the officers to repair to their respective commands.

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[1] Journal of Colonel Williams.

The ground on which the army was drawn up was so narrowed by a marsh on each flank, as to admit of removing the first Maryland brigade, so as to form a second line about two hundred yards in rear of the first. The artillery was placed in the centre of the first line, and Armstrong's light infantry was ordered to cover a small interval between the flank of the left wing and the marsh.

Frequent skirmishes occurred during the night between the advanced parties, with scarcely any other effect than to discover the situation of the armies, evince the intention of the generals, and serve as a prelude to the events of the succeeding morning.

At dawn of day the British appeared in front, advancing in column. Lieutenant Colonel Webster commanded on the right, and Lord Rawdon on the left. The seventy-first regiment composed the reserve. Four field pieces were attached to the left, and one to the corps de reserve.

Captain Singleton opened some field pieces on the front of the column, at the distance of about two hundred yards, soon after which the American left was ordered to commence the action. It was then perceived that the British right was advancing in line; and as Stevens led on his brigade in good order, Colonel Williams advanced in front with a few volunteers, intending by a partial fire to extort that of the enemy at some distance, and thereby diminish its effect on the militia. The experiment did not succeed. The British rushed forward with great impetuosity, firing and huzzaing at the same time; and the terrified militia, disregarding the exertions of Stevens, who, in a firm tone of courage, endeavoured to inspire them with confidence in the bayonets they had just received, threw down their loaded muskets, fled from the field with the utmost precipitation, and were followed by the light infantry of Armstrong. The whole North Carolina division, except one regiment commanded by Colonel Dixon, an old continental officer, which was posted nearest the continental troops, followed the shameful example. Other parts of the same brigade, which was commanded by Gregory, paused for an instant; but the terror of their brethren was soon communicated to them, and they also threw away their arms, and sought for safety in flight. Their general, while endeavouring to rally them, was dangerously wounded.

Tarlton's legion charged them as they broke, and pursued them in their flight. Gates, in person, assisted by their generals, made several efforts to rally the militia; but the alarm in their rear still continuing, they poured on like a torrent, and bore him with them. He hastened with General Caswell to Clermont, in the hope of stopping a sufficient number of them at their old encampment, to cover the retreat of the continental troops; but this hope was entirely disappointed. Believing the continental troops also to be dispersed, he gave up all as lost, and retreated with a few friends to Charlotte, about eighty miles from the field of battle, where he left General Caswell to assemble the neighbouring militia, and proceeded himself to Hillsborough, in order to concert some plan of farther defence with the government.

Entirely deserted by the militia who composed the whole centre and left wing of the army, the continental troops, with the Baron De Kalb at their head, were left without orders, under circumstances which might have justified a retreat. But taking counsel from their courage, and seeing only the path of duty, they preferred the honourable and dangerous part of maintaining their position. They were charged by Lord Rawdon about the time the militia on their left were broken by Webster; but the charge was received with unexpected firmness. The bayonet was occasionally resorted to by both parties, and the conflict was maintained for near three-quarters of an hour with equal obstinacy. During this time, the regiment on the left of the second Maryland brigade being covered by the reserve, so that it could be only engaged in front, gained ground and made prisoners.

The reserve, having its left entirely exposed, was flanked by the British right wing under Webster; who, after detaching a part of his cavalry and light infantry in pursuit of the flying militia, wheeled on that brigade, and attacking it in front and round the left flank, threw it into some disorder. The soldiers were, however, quickly rallied, and renewed the action with unimpaired spirit. Overpowered by numbers, they were again broken, and by the exertion of their officers were again formed, so as still to maintain the combat, and still to cover the flank of their brethren of the second brigade, who were in a manner blended with the enemy, and who kept up a desperate conflict in the hope of yet obtaining the victory.

The fire of the whole British army was now directed against these two devoted brigades. They had not lost an inch of ground when Lord Cornwallis, perceiving that they were without cavalry, pushed his dragoons upon them, and at the same instant, charged them with the bayonet. These gallant troops were no longer able to keep the field. They were at length broken; and, as they did not give way until intermingled with the enemy, they dispersed and fled in confusion. Before they were reduced to this last extremity, the Baron De Kalb, who fought on foot with the second Maryland brigade, fell under eleven wounds. His aid-de-camp, Lieutenant Colonel Du Buysson, received him in his arms, announced his rank and nation to the surrounding foe, and begged that they would spare his life. While thus generously exposing himself to save his friend, he received several wounds, and, with his general, was taken prisoner. The Baron expired in a few hours, and spent his last breath in dictating a letter, expressing the warmest affection for the officers and men of his division, and the most exalted admiration of their courage and good conduct.[1]

Never was a victory more complete. Every corps was broken and dispersed in the woods. The general officers were divided from their men; and, except Rutherford of the North Carolina militia who was made a prisoner, reached Charlotte at different times. Colonel Williams, who witnessed the whole battle, and bore a conspicuous part in it, concludes his very animated description of it, with the observation, that "if in this affair the militia fled too soon, the regulars may be thought almost as blameable for remaining too long on the field; especially after all hope of victory must have been despaired of." He censures freely the conduct of the brigadiers, who gave, he says, no orders whatever to their brigades.

About two hundred wagons, with a great part of the baggage, military stores, small arms, and all the artillery, fell into the hands of the conqueror. The loss of men could never be accurately ascertained, as no returns were received from the militia. Of the North Carolina division, between three and four hundred were made prisoners, and between sixty and one hundred were wounded. Of the Virginia militia, three were wounded on the field; and, as they were the first to fly, not many were taken.

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[1] Journal of Colonel Williams.

For the numbers engaged, the loss sustained by the regulars was considerable. It amounted to between three and four hundred men, of whom a large portion were officers. The British accounts state the loss of the American army at eight or nine hundred killed, and about one thousand prisoners; while their own is said to be only three hundred and twenty-five, of whom two hundred and forty-five were wounded. Although many of the militia were killed during the flight, this account is probably exaggerated. It would seem too, that while the continental troops kept the field, the loss on both sides, in that part of the action, must have been nearly equal.

On his retreat, the day of the battle, General Gates received information of the complete success of Sumpter. That officer had, on the evening that Lord Cornwallis marched from Camden, reduced the redoubt on the Wateree, captured the guard, and intercepted the escort with the stores.

This gleam of light cheered the dark gloom which enveloped his affairs but for a moment. He was soon informed that this corps also was defeated, and entirely dispersed.

On hearing of the disaster which had befallen Gates, Sumpter began to retreat up the south side of the Wateree. Believing himself out of danger, he had halted on the twenty-eighth, during the heat of the day, near the Catawba ford, to give his harassed troops some repose. At that place he was overtaken by Tarlton, who had been detached in pursuit of him on the morning of the 17th, and who, advancing with his accustomed celerity, entered the American camp so suddenly, as in a great measure to cut off the men from their arms. Some slight resistance made from behind the wagons was soon overcome, and the Americans fled precipitately to the river and woods. Between three and four hundred of them were killed and wounded; their baggage, artillery, arms and ammunition were lost; and the prisoners and stores they had taken were recovered. This advantage was gained with the loss of only nine men killed and six wounded.

Two videttes had been placed by Sumpter, on the road along which Tarlton had advanced, who fired upon his van and killed one of his dragoons, upon which they were both sabred. We are informed by Colonel Tarlton that the inquiries made by Sumpter respecting the two shots, were answered by an assurance from an officer, just returned from the advanced sentries, that the militia were firing at cattle.

Intelligence of this disaster reached Charlotte next day. Generals Smallwood and Gist were then arrived at that place, and about one hundred and fifty straggling, dispirited, half famished officers and soldiers had also dropped in. It was thought adviseable to retreat immediately to Salisbury. From that place, General Gates directed the remnant of the troops to march to Hillsborough, where he was endeavouring to assemble another army, which might enable him yet to contend for the southern states.

CHAPTER XVIII

While disasters thus crowded on each other in the southern states, the Commander-in-chief found himself surrounded with difficulties, which required his utmost exertions to avoid calamities equally distressing. His urgent requisitions for men to supply the places of those who were leaving the service, were not complied with, and the soldiers who remained, could scarcely be preserved from either perishing with cold and hunger, or dispersing and living on plunder.

1780.

General Greene and Colonel Wadsworth, who had, for the preceding year, been at the head of the quartermaster and commissary departments, possessed distinguished merit, and had employed assistants of unquestionable ability and integrity. Yet, for a great part of the campaign, the rations were frequently reduced, and the army was rarely supplied with provisions for more than a few days in advance. Soon after coming into winter quarters, the magazines were exhausted, and afforded neither meat nor flour to be delivered to the men.

This state of things had been long foreseen; and all the means in the power of the Commander-in-chief had been used to prevent it. Repeated representations of the actual famine with which the army was threatened, had been made to congress, and to the state governments; but no adequate relief was afforded; and such was the condition of the finances, so embarrassing the state of affairs, that it was perhaps attainable only by measures which the governments could not venture to adopt.

The rapid depreciation of the continental currency, had long been viewed with apprehensive anxiety by the enlightened friends of the revolution, and various unsuccessful expedients had been essayed for the purpose of checking its progress. All perceived that the great quantity in circulation was the principal cause of the diminution of its value; and congress had resolved not to exceed two hundred millions of dollars in their emissions. In the mean time, the utmost endeavours were used to defer an evil so justly dreaded, and among the expedients employed, was that of withholding from the public agents, the money which was necessary for public purposes. This unwise experiment, while it defeated its own object, threatened the dissolution of the American army.

The difference between the value of the article at the times of contract and of payment was soon perceived, and, of course, influenced its price. But this was the least mischievous consequence of this mistaken policy. The public agents contracted enormous debts which they were unable to discharge. Repeated disappointments destroyed their credit; and, towards the close of the year 1779, they found it impracticable to obtain supplies for the subsistence of the army.

From these causes, the contracts entered into could not be co-extensive with the public wants; and many of those which were made were not complied with.

In this critical state of things, an entire revolution was made in the commissary department. Such was the prejudice against the system adopted by Great Britain, for supplying by contract, that it had been usual to allow, as a compensation to the commissary, a stipulated commission on all the monies expended on public account. After some time, this allowance was supposed to be an inducement to purchase at high prices; and an arrangement was made on the first of January, by which the commissary general was to receive a fixed nominal salary in the paper currency, and was permitted to appoint assistants whose compensations were also fixed, and who were to defray, out of those compensations, all the expenses attending the transactions of the business. The practice of allowing them rations and forage was discontinued.

This new system was unfortunately so modified as to increase the embarrassments of the department. It was found difficult to obtain assistants and agents for the compensation allowed; and those who were willing to be employed, were unequal to the duties assigned them.

For several days, the soldiers were reduced to half allowance, and sometimes to less. At length, affairs came to the crisis which had long been threatened; and, early in January, a letter was received from Colonel Wadsworth, informing the general that it was absolutely out of his power to supply the army longer with meat, as he was without money, and had totally exhausted his credit. About the same time, the assistant commissary, residing in camp, gave notice that his stock of provisions was on the point of being expended, and that he had no immediate prospect of a farther supply.

This state of things, compelled the Commander-in-chief to adopt efficacious measures, to relieve the immediate and pressing wants of his soldiers. He required from each county in the state of Jersey, a quantity of meat and flour proportioned to its resources, to be raised and forwarded to the army within a limited time, not exceeding six days. In a circular letter addressed to the magistrates, he stated the pressing wants of the army, and the necessity of resorting to coercion should his requisition fail.

To the honour of the magistrates and people of New Jersey, although their country was much exhausted, the supplies required were instantly furnished, and a temporary relief obtained.

The patient and uncomplaining fortitude with which the soldiers bore their sufferings, was strong evidence of their patriotism, and could not fail to make a deep impression on their general. But while their virtues excited his sensibilities, he expressed his fears very freely to congress, that they might be too severely tried.

The unusual severity of the winter, seemed to furnish an opportunity for active enterprise, which the Commander-in-chief observed, without being able to improve. The garrison of New York and its immediate dependencies, was supposed to be reduced to ten or eleven thousand effectives; and the security heretofore derived from its insular situation no longer existed. The ice was so strong that the whole army, with its train of wagons and artillery, might pass over without danger. This circumstance afforded a glorious occasion for striking a blow, which, if successful, would most probably terminate the war. The effort would seem not to have exceeded the strength of America, could that strength have been exerted in proper season; but the government possessed neither sufficient energy nor concentration of power to call it forth; and this opportunity passed away, as many which present themselves in the course of human affairs, must pass away, if those who should take advantage of them, only begin to deliberate about making preparations in the season for action.

The force under the immediate command of General Washington, was decidedly inferior to that in New York; and so far was he from having reason to expect immediate reinforcements, that congress had not agreed on making a requisition for them. In addition to this feebleness in point of numbers, the soldiers were not half clothed; provisions for immediate use could be obtained only by contributions from the people; the quartermaster's department was unable to put an army in motion; and the military chest did not contain a dollar.

Under the pressure of this combination of discouraging circumstances, the active mind of Washington still looked forward to the possibility of deriving some advantage from the exposed situation of his adversary.

The troops on Staten Island were computed at one thousand or twelve hundred men; and the firm bridge of ice now uniting that island to the Jersey shore, seemed to furnish an opportunity for bearing off this corps. General Washington determined to make the attempt with two thousand five hundred men, to be commanded by Major General Lord Stirling. The more distant troops moved down on sleds; and, to favour a surprise, the opinion was inculcated that they only constituted a relief for the detachment already on the lines.

On the night of the 14th of January, Lord Stirling moved over from De Hart's point; and, detaching Lieutenant Colonel Willet to Decker's house, where Buskirk's regiment was stationed, proceeded himself to the watering place, where the main body was posted. Notwithstanding the precautions which had been taken, the alarm had been given at each post, and the troops had saved themselves in their works; so that only a few prisoners were made. Contrary to the intelligence previously received, the communication with New York was still open; and the works appeared too strong to justify the hazard of attempting to carry them by assault.

The object of the expedition being unattainable, Lord Stirling commenced his retreat, which was effected with inconsiderable loss. A body of cavalry, which charged his rear, was repulsed;

but, from the intenseness of the cold, and the defectiveness of his means to protect his men from it, some of them were frost bitten, and a few stragglers were made prisoners.

The excessive cold continuing, the rivers were soon afterwards completely blocked up. Even arms of the sea were passable on the ice; and the islands about the mouth of the Hudson, presented the appearance of one whole and unbroken continent. This state of things produced a great degree of suffering among all classes in New York. The supplies usually received by water failed totally, and a great scarcity of provisions and of fuel was the consequence. To increase this scarcity, the American troops on the lines were so disposed as to interrupt the communication between the country and the town; and these arrangements produced a partisan war, in which the advantage was rather on the side of the British.

In one of the most important of these skirmishes, Captain Roberts, of Massachusetts, with fourteen of his men, were killed on the spot; seventeen were wounded, of whom three died in a few days; and Lieutenant Colonel Thompson, of Massachusetts, who commanded the party, two captains, four subalterns, and ninety non-commissioned officers and privates were made prisoners.

The emission of the full sum of two hundred millions of dollars in continental bills of credit, which congress had solemnly resolved not to exceed, had been completed in November, 1779, and the money was expended. The requisitions on the states to replenish the treasury by taxes were not fully complied with; and, had they even been strictly observed, would not have produced a sum equal to the public expenditure. It was therefore necessary to devise other measures for the prosecution of the war. During the distresses which brought the army to the brink of dissolution, these measures were under consideration. So early as December, 1779, congress had determined to change the mode of supplying the army from purchases to requisitions of specific articles on the several states. As preliminary to this system, commissioners were appointed to make the estimates, and to introduce every practicable reform in the expenditures. This subject was under deliberation until the 25th of February, when sundry resolutions were passed, apportioning on the states their respective quotas of provisions, spirits, and forage, for the ensuing campaign. The value of the several articles was estimated in specie; and assurances were given that accounts between the states should be regularly kept, and finally settled in Spanish milled dollars.

For the purpose of inducing and facilitating a compliance with these requisitions, congress also resolved, "that any state which shall have taken the necessary measures for furnishing its quota, and have given notice thereof to congress, shall be authorized to prohibit any continental quartermaster or commissary from purchasing within its limits."

These resolutions, constituting the basis of a new system on which the future subsistence of the army was essentially to depend, were too deeply interesting not to receive the anxious attention of the Commander-in-chief. With regret, he communicated to congress the radical defects he perceived in their arrangements, with his apprehensions that this untried scheme would fail in practice.

His judgment, and the judgment of all men engaged in high and responsible situations, was decidedly in favour of conducting the war on a national rather than on a state system. But, independent of this radical objection, economy had been so much more consulted than the probable necessities of the army, that, in almost every article, the estimate had fallen far short of the demand to be reasonably expected.

The total omission to provide means for supplying occasional deficiencies from the surplus resources of any particular state, was an error of still greater magnitude. It was obvious that the demand in any state which should become the theatre of war, would be much greater than its quota; and experience had shown that the carriage of specific articles from distant places was always difficult and expensive, and sometimes impracticable. Yet no means were adopted to supply such extraordinary demand, whatever might be the resources of the country. A still more radical objection to the system was the principle, enabling any state which should take means to comply with the requisition, and should notify those means to the government of the United States, to prohibit the continental agents from making any purchases within its territory. Among the states which adopted the proposition of congress was New Jersey, in which the largest division of the army was stationed. Its legislature passed an act prohibiting the purchase of provisions within its jurisdiction by the staff of the continental line, under severe penalties; and refused to authorize its own agents to provide for any emergency however pressing. It was an additional objection to these requisitions, that they specified no periods of the year within which certain portions of the articles demanded should be raised, and consequently might be complied with, although the army should be left destitute of every necessary for a considerable part of the campaign.

These suggestions, however, with others less material to the military operations, did not receive the attention which was due to their importance. A disposition in the members of congress, growing inevitably out of the organization of the government, to consult the will of their respective states, and to prefer that will to any other object, had discovered itself at an early period, and had gained strength with time. The state of the national treasury was calculated to promote this disposition. It was empty, and could be replenished only by taxes, which congress had not the power to impose; or by new emissions of bills of credit, which the government had pledged the public faith not to make, and which would rest for their redemption only on that faith, which would be violated in the very act of their emission. Under these circumstances, it required a degree of energy seldom found, to struggle with surrounding difficulties for the preservation of a general system, and to resist the temptation to throw the nation at the feet of the states, in whom the vital principle of power, the right to levy taxes, was exclusively vested. While the continental currency preserved its value, this essential defect of the constitution was, in some measure, concealed. The facility with which money was obtained from the press, was a temporary substitute for the command of the resources of the country. But when this expedient failed, it was scarcely possible to advance a single step, but under the guidance of the respective states.

Whatever might be the future effect of this system it was impracticable to bring it into immediate operation. The legislatures of the several states, by whom it was to be adopted, and carried into execution, were, many of them, not then in session; and were to meet at different times through the ensuing spring. It was consequently to be expected that great part of the summer would pass away before the supplies to be raised by the measure, could be brought into use. In the mean time, and until a new scheme of finance, which accompanied the requisition of specific articles, should be tried, there was no regular provision for the army. Bills to the amount of £100,000 sterling, payable at six months' sight, were drawn on Mr. Jay, and others to the same amount, on Mr. Laurens, who were empowered to negotiate loans in Europe. These bills were sold in small sums on pressing occasions; and the loan offices remained open for the purpose of borrowing from individuals.

This new scheme of finance was a second essay to substitute credit unsupported by solid funds, and resting solely on the public faith, for money.

The vast quantity of bills unavoidably emitted before the establishment of regular governments possessing sufficient energy to enforce the collection of taxes, or to provide for their redemption, and before the governments of Europe were sufficiently confident of their stability to afford them aid or credit, was assigned by congress as the principal cause of that depreciation which had taken place in the continental currency. The United States were now, they said, under different circumstances. Their independence was secure; their civil governments were established and vigorous; and the spirit of their citizens ardent for exertion. The government being thus rendered competent to the object, it was necessary to reduce the quantity of paper in circulation, and to appropriate funds that should ensure the punctual redemption of the bills.

For these purposes, the several states were required to continue to bring into the continental treasury, monthly, from February to April inclusive, their full quotas of fifteen millions of dollars. In complying with this requisition, one Spanish milled dollar was to be received in lieu of forty dollars of the paper currency.

The bills so brought in were not to be reissued, but destroyed; and other bills, not to exceed one dollar for every twenty received in discharge of taxes, were to be emitted.

These bills were to be redeemable within six years, and were to bear an interest of five *per centum per annum,* to be paid at the time of their redemption in specie, or, at the election of the holder, annually, in bills of exchange drawn by the United States on their commissioners in Europe at four shillings and six pence sterling for each dollar. They were to be issued in ascertained proportions on the funds of the several states, with a collateral security on the part of the government, to pay the quota of any particular state, which the events of the war might render incapable of complying with its own engagements. The bills were to be deposited in the continental loan-offices of the several states, and were to be signed only as the money then in circulation should be brought in by taxes or otherwise. After being signed, six-tenths of them were to be delivered to the states on whose funds they were to be issued, and the remaining four-tenths to be retained for the use of the continent.

The operation of this scheme of finance was necessarily suspended by the same causes which suspended that for requiring specific articles. It depended on the sanction and co-operation of the several state legislatures, many of which were yet to convene.

As it would be impracticable to maintain the value of the money about to be emitted, should the states continue to issue bills of credit, they were earnestly requested to suspend future emissions, and to call the current paper out of circulation. But the time for this measure was not yet arrived, and many of the states continued the use of the press till late in the following year.

The establishment of the army for the ensuing campaign, was fixed at thirty-five thousand two hundred and eleven men, and the measures for recruiting it were founded on the state system, which was become entirely predominant.

The few intelligent statesmen who could combine practical good sense with patriotism, perceived the dangerous inefficacy of a system which openly abandoned the national character, and proceeded on the principle that the American confederacy was no more than an alliance of independent nations.

That great delays would be experienced, that the different parts of the plan would be acted on too unequally and too uncertainly to furnish a solid basis for military calculations, that the system would be totally deranged in its execution, were mischiefs foreseen and lamented by many, as resulting inevitably from a course of measures to which the government of the Union was under the painful necessity of submitting.

"Certain I am," said the Commander-in-chief, in a confidential letter to a member of the national legislature, "that unless congress speaks in a more decisive tone; unless they are vested with powers by the several states, competent to the great purposes of the war, or assume them as matter of right, and they and the states respectively act with more energy than they hitherto have done, our cause is lost. We can no longer drudge on in the old way. By ill-timing the adoption of measures, by delays in the execution of them, or by unwarrantable jealousies; we incur enormous expenses, and derive no benefit from them. One state will comply with a requisition from congress; another neglects to do it; a third executes it by halves; and all differ in the manner, the matter, or so much in point of time, that we are all working up hill, and, while such a system as the present one, or rather want of one, prevails, we ever shall be unable to apply our strength or resources to any advantage.

"This, my dear sir, is plain language to a member of congress; but it is the language of truth and friendship. It is the result of long thinking, close application, and strict observation. I see one head gradually changing into thirteen; I see one army branching into thirteen; and, instead of looking up to congress as the supreme controlling power of the United States, consider themselves as dependent on their respective states. In a word, I see the power of congress declining too fast for the respect which is due to them as the great representative body of America, and am fearful of the consequences."

But whatever might be his objections to the proposed system, General Washington was unremitting in his endeavours to render the plan perfect in detail, and to give to its execution all the aid which his situation and influence enabled him to afford.

The distresses of the army for food, which had found temporary relief in the particular exertions of the magistrates and people of New Jersey, soon returned; and it became once more necessary, even after the magazines had been in some degree replenished, to recur to the same persons for assistance. The supplies of forage had failed, and a great proportion of the horses had perished, or been rendered unfit for use. Neither funds nor credit were possessed for the purchase of others, and the quarter-master-general found himself unable to transport provisions from remote magazines into camp. This circumstance reduced the Commander-in-chief to the painful necessity of calling on the patriotism of private citizens, under the penalty of a military impressment, should a voluntary contribution be refused, for those means of conveyance which the government could not supply.

The want of food was not the only difficulty to be surmounted. Others of a serious nature presented themselves. The pay of an officer was reduced by the depreciation of the currency, to such a miserable pittance as to be unequal to the supply of the most moderate demands. The pay of a major general would no longer hire an express rider, and that of a captain would not purchase the shoes in which he marched. The American officers were not rich; and many of them had expended their *little all* in the service. If they had exhausted their private funds, or if they possessed none, they could rely only on the state to which they belonged for such clothing as the state might be willing or able to furnish. These supplies were so insufficient and unequal, as to produce extreme dissatisfaction. In the lines of some of the states, the officers gave notice in a body, of their determination to resign on a given day, if some decent and certain provision should not be made for them. The remonstrances of the Commander-in-chief produced an offer to serve as volunteers until their successors should be appointed; and, on the rejection of this proposition, they were with difficulty induced to remain in service.

Under these complicated embarrassments, it required all that enthusiastic patriotism which pre-eminently distinguishes the soldier of principle; all that ardent attachment to the cause of their country which originally brought them into the field, and which their sufferings could not diminish; all the influence of the Commander-in-chief, whom they almost adored; to retain in the service men who felt themselves neglected, and who believed themselves to be the objects of the jealousy of their country, rather than of its gratitude.

Among the privates, causes of disgust grew out of the very composition of the army, which increased the dissatisfaction produced by their multiplied wants.

The first effort made to enlist troops for the war, had, in some degree, succeeded. While these men found themselves obliged to continue in service without compensation, and often without the common necessaries of life, they perceived the vacant ranks in their regiments filled up by men who were to continue only for a few months, and who received bounties for that short service, from individuals or from the states, which were of great real value, and which appeared to soldiers not acquainted with the actual state of depreciation, to be immense. They could not fail to compare situations, and to repine at engagements which deprived them of advantages which they saw in possession of others. Many were induced to contest those engagements;[1] many to desert a service in which they experienced such irritating inequalities; and all felt with the more poignant indignation, those distressing failures in the commissary department, which so frequently recurred.

In consequence of the strong representations made to congress on these various causes of disquiet, a committee of three members repaired to camp for the purpose of consulting with the Commander-in-chief on such arrangements as the means in possession of the government would enable it to make, and the present state of the army might require. In representing the condition of the troops, they said, "That the army was unpaid for five months; that it seldom had more than six days provisions in advance, and was on several occasions, for several successive days, without meat; that the army was destitute of forage; that the medical department had neither tea, chocolate, wine, or spirituous liquors of any kind; that every department of the army was without money, and had not even the shadow of credit left; that the patience of the soldiers, borne down by the pressure of complicated sufferings, was on the point of being exhausted."

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[1] In some instances, the civil power of the state in which such soldiers happened to be, attempted to interfere and to discharge even those belonging to the lines of other states, who asserted their right to be discharged. It was with some difficulty the general could arrest this dangerous interposition.

To relieve this gloomy state of things by transfusing into it a ray of hope for the future, a resolution was passed, declaring that congress would make good to the line of the army, and to the independent corps thereof, the deficiency of their original pay, which had been occasioned by the depreciation of the continental currency; and that the money or other articles heretofore received, should be considered as advanced on account, to be comprehended in the settlement to be finally made. The benefits of this resolution were confined to those who were then in actual service, or should thereafter come into it, and who were engaged for the war or for three years.

This resolution was published in general orders, and had considerable influence on the army, but not sufficient to remove the various causes of dissatisfaction which existed, and were continually multiplying. The engagement to make good the depreciation of their pay, was an act of justice too long withheld; and no promise for the future, could supply the place of present comfortable subsistence. No hope was given that their condition, in this respect, would be improved. For a considerable time, the troops received only from one-half to one-eighth of a ration of meat and, at length, were several days without a single pound of that necessary article.

This long course of suffering had unavoidably produced some relaxation of discipline, and had gradually soured the minds of the soldiers to such a degree, that their discontents broke out into actual mutiny.

On the 25th of May, two regiments belonging to Connecticut paraded under arms with a declared resolution to return home, or to obtain subsistence at the point of the bayonet. The soldiers of the other regiments, though not actually joining the mutineers, showed no disposition to suppress the mutiny. By great exertions on the part of the officers, aided by the appearance of a neighbouring brigade of Pennsylvania, then commanded by Colonel Stewart, the leaders were secured, and the two regiments brought back to their duty. Some sentiments, however, were disclosed by the soldiers, in answer to the remonstrances of their officers, of a serious and alarming nature. Their pay was now five months in arrear, and the depreciation of the money, they said, was such, that it would be worth nothing when received. When reminded of the late resolution of congress for making good the loss sustained by depreciation, of the reputation acquired by their past good conduct, and of the value of the object for which they were contending; they answered that their sufferings were too great to be longer supported; that they wanted present relief; and must have some present substantial recompense for their services. A paper was found in the brigade, which appeared to have been brought by some emissary from New York, stimulating the troops to the abandonment of the cause in which they were engaged.

The discontents of the army, and the complaints excited in the country by the frequent requisitions on the people of New Jersey, had been communicated, with such exaggeration, to the officer commanding in New York, as to induce the opinion that the American soldiers were ready to desert their standards; and the people of New Jersey to change their government. To countenance these dispositions, General Knyphausen embarked at Staten Island, and landed in the night with about five thousand men at Elizabethtown Point, in New Jersey. Early next morning he marched towards Springfield, by the way of Connecticut Farms, but soon perceived that the real temper, both of the country and the army, had been misunderstood.

June 6.

On the appearance of the enemy, the militia assembled with alacrity, and aided the small patrolling parties of continental troops in harassing him on his march from Elizabethtown to the Connecticut Farms, a distance of five or six miles, where a halt was made. In a spirit of revenge, unworthy the general of an army, more in the character of Tryon who was present, than of Knyphausen who commanded, this settlement was reduced to ashes.[1]

From the Farms, Knyphausen proceeded to Springfield. The

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[1] This circumstance would scarcely have deserved notice had it not been accompanied by one of those melancholy events, which even war does not authorise, and which made, at the time, a very deep impression.

Mrs. Caldwell, the wife of the clergyman of the village, had been induced to remain in her house, under the persuasion that her presence might protect it from pillage, and that her person could not be endangered, as Colonel Dayton who commanded the militia determined not to stop in the settlement. While sitting in the midst of her children, with a sucking infant in her arms, a soldier came up to the window and discharged his musket at her. She received the ball in her bosom, and instantly expired.

Jersey brigade, commanded by General Maxwell, and the militia of the adjacent country, took an advantageous position at that place, and seemed determined to defend it. Knyphausen halted in its neighbourhood, and remained on his ground until night.

Having received intelligence of this movement, General Washington put his army in motion early in the same morning that Knyphausen marched from Elizabethtown Point, and advanced to the Short Hills, in the rear of Springfield, while the British were in the neighbourhood of that place. Dispositions were made for an engagement the next morning, but Knyphausen retired in the night to the place of his disembarkation.

June 8.

General Washington continued on the hills near Springfield, too weak to hazard an engagement, but on ground chosen by himself. His continental troops did not exceed three thousand men. A return of the whole army under his immediate command, made on the 3d of June, exhibited in the column, of present, fit for duty, only three thousand seven hundred and sixty, rank and file. So reduced was that force on which America relied for independence. "You but too well know," said General Washington in a letter to a friend, giving an account of this incursion, "and will regret with me the cause which justifies this insulting manœuvre on the part of the enemy. It deeply affects the honour of the states, a vindication of which could not be attempted in our present circumstances, without most intimately hazarding their security; at least so far as it may depend on the preservation of the army. Their character, their interest, their all that is dear, call upon them in the most pressing manner, to place the army immediately on a respectable footing."

The long continuance of Knyphausen at Elizabethtown, strengthened a suspicion that Sir Henry Clinton was about to return from South Carolina, and intended, without disembarking his troops, to proceed up the Hudson to West Point; and that the movement into Jersey was a feint designed to cover the real object.

The letters of the Commander-in-chief, addressed about this period, to those who might be supposed to possess influence in the government of the union, or in those of the states, exhibit his conjectures respecting the designs of his adversary, as well as his apprehensions from the condition of his own army. To the committee of congress, in camp, he observed, "General Knyphausen still continues in the Jerseys with all the force which can be spared from New York, a force greatly superior to ours. Should Sir Henry join him, their superiority will be decided, and equal to almost any thing they may think proper to attempt. The enemy, it is true, are at this time inactive; but their continuance in their present position, proves that they have some project of importance in contemplation. Perhaps they are only waiting until the militia grow tired and return home, (which they are doing every hour,) to prosecute their designs with the less opposition. This would be a critical moment for us. Perhaps they are waiting the arrival of Sir Henry Clinton, either to push up the North River against the Highland posts, or to bend their whole force against this army. In either case, the most disastrous consequences are to be apprehended. You, who are well acquainted with our situation, need no arguments to evince the danger.

"The militia of this state have run to arms, and behaved with an ardour and spirit of which there are few examples. But perseverance, in enduring the rigours of military service, is not to be expected from those who are not by profession obliged to it. The reverse of this opinion has been a great misfortune in our affairs, and it is high time we should recover from an error of so pernicious a nature. We must absolutely have a force of a different composition, or we must relinquish the contest. In a few days, we may expect to rely almost entirely on our continental force, and this, from your own observation, is totally inadequate to our safety. The exigency calls loudly on the states to carry all the recommendations of the committee into the most vigorous and immediate execution; but more particularly that for completing our batteries by a draught with all possible expedition."

In this precise state of things, he received intelligence of the return of Sir Henry Clinton from the conquest of South Carolina. June 18.

The regular force in New York and its dependencies was now estimated at twelve thousand men, great part of whom might be drawn into the field for any particular purpose, because Sir Henry Clinton could command about four thousand militia and refugees for garrison duty.

In communicating to congress the appearance of the British fleet off the Hook, General Washington observed, "a very alarming scene may shortly open, and it will be happy for us if we shall be able to steer clear of some serious misfortune in this quarter. I hope the period has not yet arrived, which will convince the different states by fatal experience, that some of them have mistaken the true situation of this country. I flatter myself, however, that we may still retrieve our affairs if we have but a just sense of them, and are actuated by a spirit of liberal policy and exertion equal to the emergency. Could we once see this spirit generally prevailing, I should not despair of a prosperous issue of the campaign. But there is no time to be lost. The danger is imminent and pressing; the obstacles to be surmounted are great and numerous; and our efforts must be instant, unreserved, and universal."

On the arrival of Sir Henry Clinton, the design of acting offensively in the Jerseys was resumed; but, to divide the American army, demonstrations were made of an intention to seize West Point. To be in readiness for either object, General Greene was left at Springfield with two brigades of continental troops, and with the Jersey militia; while, with the greater part of his army, General Washington proceeded slowly towards Pompton, watching attentively the movements of the British, and apparently unwilling to separate himself too far from Greene. He had not marched farther than Rockaway, eleven miles beyond Morristown, when the British army advanced from Elizabethtown towards Springfield in great force. General Washington detached a brigade to hang on their right flank, and returned with the residue of his army five or six miles, in order to be in a situation to support Greene.

Early in the morning of the 23d, the British army moved in two columns, with great rapidity, towards Springfield. Major Lee was advanced on the Vauxhall road, which was taken by the right column; and Colonel Dayton on the direct road, which was taken by the left. Both these corps made every possible exertion to check the advancing enemy, while General Greene concentrated his little army at Springfield. Scarcely had he made his dispositions, when the British front appeared, and a cannonade commenced between their van and the American artillery which defended a bridge over Rahway, a small river running east of the town, which was guarded by Colonel Angel with less than two hundred men. Colonel Shreve was posted at a second bridge, also over a branch of the Rahway, in order to cover the retreat of Angel from the first. Major Lee with his dragoons and the piquets under Captain Walker, supported by Colonel Ogden, was directed to defend a bridge on the Vauxhall road. The residue of the continental troops were drawn up on high ground, in the rear of the town, with the militia on their flanks.

The right column of the British advanced on Lee, who disputed the passage of the bridge until a considerable body of the enemy forded the river above him, and gained the point of a hill which endangered his position. At this instant, their left attacked Colonel Angel, who defended himself with persevering gallantry. The conflict was sharp, and was maintained for about half an hour, when, compelled by superior numbers to give way, he retired in good order, and brought off his wounded. His retreat was covered by Colonel Shreve, who, after Angel had passed him, was ordered by General Greene to join his brigade. The English then took possession of the town and reduced it to ashes.

The obstinate resistance which had been encountered; the gallantry and discipline displayed by the continental troops who had been engaged, the strength of Greene's position; the firm countenance maintained by his troops, small detachments of whom kept up a continual skirmishing with a view to save a part of the town; all contributed to deter Sir Henry Clinton from a farther prosecution of his original plan. He withdrew that afternoon to Elizabethtown; and, in the following night, passed over to Staten Island. It is probable that the caution manifested during this expedition is to be ascribed to the intelligence that a formidable fleet and army from France were daily expected on the coast.

When the Marquis de Lafayette obtained permission to visit his native country, he retained, with his rank in the American army, that zeal for the interests of the United States, which the affectionate attentions he had received, and the enthusiasm of a soldier in the cause of those for whom he had made his first campaigns, were calculated to inspire in a young and generous mind, in favour of an infant people, struggling for liberty and self-government with the hereditary rival of his nation.

He was received at the court of Versailles with every mark of favour and distinction;[1] and all his influence was employed in impressing on the cabinet, the importance and policy of granting succours to the United States.

Having succeeded in this favourite object, and finding no probability of active employment on the continent of Europe, he obtained permission to return to America. He arrived late in April at Boston, and hastened to head quarters; whence he proceeded to the seat of Government with the information that his most Christian Majesty had consented to employ a considerable land and naval armament in the United States, for the ensuing campaign. This intelligence gave a new impulse both to congress and the state legislatures. The states from New Hampshire to Virginia inclusive, were required to pay, within thirty days, ten millions of dollars, part of their quotas which became due on the first of March; and specie bills to the amount of fifty thousand dollars were drawn on Messieurs Franklin and Jay. These sums were sacredly appropriated to the objects of bringing the army into the field, and forwarding their supplies.

The defects in the requisition system, which had been suggested by General Washington, were corrected; and the committee in camp, at the head of which was the late General Schuyler, was empowered, at the request of the Commander-in-chief, to take such measures as were in the power of congress, for drawing out the resources of the nation.

To give effect to these resolutions, the several state legislatures from New Hampshire to Virginia inclusive, were requested to invest the Executives, or some other persons, with powers sufficiently ample to comply with such applications as might be made to them by the committee in camp, and a circular letter was addressed to the state governments, urging them to second the efforts of Congress.

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[1] After he had visited the ministers, an arrest of eight days, during which he resided with his relation the Marshal de Noailles, was imposed on him for the sake of form and in honour of the royal authority, which he had disregarded by proceding to America. After the expiration of this term he presented himself to the King, who graciously said he pardoned his disobedience, in consideration of his good conduct and of his services.—*Letter from Gen. Lafayette.*

Letters equally stimulating were written by the committee from camp; and the well earned influence of the Commander-in-chief was also employed to induce an exertion proportioned to the crisis. In addition to those incentives which might operate on ardent minds, he endeavoured, by a temperate review of the situation and resources of the belligerent powers, to convince the judgment that America would have real cause to fear the issue of the contest, should she neglect to improve the advantage to be afforded by the succours expected from France.[1]

Under the impressions produced by these representations, the state legislatures, generally, passed the laws which were required; but the energy displayed in their passage was not maintained in their execution. In general, the assemblies followed the example of congress, and apportioned on the several counties or towns within the state, the quota to be furnished by each. This division of the state was again to be subdivided into classes, each of which was to furnish a man by contributions or taxes imposed upon itself.

These operations were slow and unproductive.

It was not on the state sovereignties only that beneficial effects were produced by a candid statement of public affairs, several patriotic individuals contributed largely from their private funds to the aid of the public. The merchants, and other citizens of Philadelphia, with a zeal guided by that sound discretion which turns expenditure to the best account, established a bank, for the support of which they subscribed £315,000, Pennsylvania money, to be paid, if required, in specie, the principal object of which was to supply the army with provisions and rum. By the plan of this bank, its members were to derive no emolument whatever from the institution. For advancing their credit and their money, they required only that congress should pledge the faith of the union to reimburse the costs and charges of the transaction in a reasonable time, and should give such assistance to its execution as might be in their power.

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[1] See note No. XVI at the end of the volume.

The ladies of Philadelphia too gave a splendid example of patriotism, by large donations for the immediate relief of the suffering army. This example was extensively followed;[1] but it is not by the contributions of the generous that a war can or ought to be maintained. The purse of the nation alone can supply the expenditures of a nation; and, when all are interested in a contest, all ought to contribute to its support. Taxes, and taxes only, can furnish for the prosecution of a national war, means which are just in themselves, or competent to the object. Notwithstanding these donations, the distresses of the army, for clothing especially, still continued; and were the more severely felt when a co-operation with French troops was expected. So late as the 20th of June, General Washington informed congress, that he still laboured under the painful and humiliating embarrassment of having no shirts for the soldiers, many of whom were destitute of that necessary article. "For the troops to be without clothing at any time," he added, "is highly injurious to the service, and distressing to our feelings; but the want will be more peculiarly mortifying when they come to act with those of our allies. If it be possible, I have no doubt, immediate measures will be taken to relieve their distress.

"It is also most sincerely wished, that there could be some supplies of clothing furnished to the officers. There are a great many whose condition is still miserable. This is, in some instances, the case with the whole lines of the states. It would be well for their own sakes, and for the public good, if they could be furnished. They will not be able, when our friends come to co-operate with us, to go on a common routine of duty; and if they should, they must, from their appearance, be held in low estimation."

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[1] This instance of patriotism on the part of our fair and amiable countrywomen, is far from being single. Their conduct throughout the war was uniform. They shared with cheerfulness and gaiety, the privations and sufferings to which the distress of the times exposed their country. In every stage of this severe trial, they displayed virtues which have not been always attributed to their sex, but which it is believed they will, on every occasion calculated to unfold them, be found to possess. With a ready acquiescence, with a firmness always cheerful, and a constancy never lamenting the sacrifices which were made, they not only yielded up all the elegancies, delicacies, and even conveniences to be furnished by wealth and commerce, relying on their farms and on domestic industry for every article of food and raiment, but, consenting to share the produce of their own labour, they gave up without regret, a considerable portion of the covering designed for their own families, to supply the wants of the distressed soldiers; and heroically suppressed the involuntary sigh which the departure of their brothers, their sons, and their husbands, for the camp, rended from their bosoms.

This picture presents in strong colours, the real patriotism of the American army. One heroic effort, though it may dazzle the mind with its splendour, is an exertion most men are capable of making; but continued patient suffering and unremitting perseverance, in a service promising no personal emolument, and exposing the officer unceasingly, not only to wants of every kind, but to those circumstances of humiliation which seem to degrade him in the eyes of others, demonstrate a fortitude of mind, a strength of virtue, and a firmness of principle, which ought never to be forgotten.

As the several legislative acts for bringing the army into the field, did not pass until the months of June and July, General Washington remained uninformed of the force on which he might rely, and was consequently unable to form any certain plan of operations.

This suspense was the more cruelly embarrassing, as, in the event of an attempt upon New York, it was of the utmost importance that the French fleet should, on its arrival, take possession of the harbour, which was then weakly defended. But, should this measure be followed by a failure to furnish the requisite support, it would not only be ineffectual; but, in a very possible state of things, might sacrifice the fleet itself.

Should it be ascertained that the states were either unable or unwilling to make the exertions necessary for the siege of New York, other objects presented themselves against which the allied arms might be turned to advantage. To avoid the disgrace and danger of attempting what could not be effected, and the reproach of neglecting any attainable object, were equally desirable, and equally required a correct knowledge of the measures which would be taken by the states.

In a letter to congress communicating his anxiety on this interesting subject, and his total want of information respecting it, General Washington observed, "The season is come when we have every reason to expect the arrival of the fleet, and yet, for want of this point of primary consequence, it is impossible for me to form a system of co-operation. I have no basis to act upon; and, of course, were this generous succour of our ally now to arrive, I should find myself in the most awkward, embarrassing, and painful situation. The general and the admiral, from the relation in which I stand, as soon as they approach our coast, will require of me a plan of the measures to be pursued, and there ought of right to be one prepared; but circumstanced as I am, I can not even give them conjectures. From these considerations, I have suggested to the committee, by a letter I had the honour of addressing them yesterday, the indispensable necessity of their writing again to the states, urging them to give immediate and precise information of the measures they have taken and of the result. The interest of the states, the honour and reputation of our councils, the justice and gratitude due to our allies, all require that I should, without delay, be enabled to ascertain and inform them, what we can or can not undertake. There is a point which ought now to be determined, on the success of which all our future operations may depend, on which, for want of knowing our prospects, I can make no decision. For fear of involving the fleet and army of our allies in circumstances which would expose them, if not seconded by us, to material inconvenience and hazard, I shall be compelled to suspend it, and the delay may be fatal to our hopes."

The tardy proceedings of the states were not less perplexing to congress than to the Commander-in-chief. To the minister of his most Christian Majesty, who had in the preceding January communicated the probability of receiving succour from France, that body, without calculating accurately the means of complying with its engagements, had pledged itself unequivocally for effectual co-operation. The minister was assured, that the United States had expectations on which they could rely with confidence, of bringing into the field, for the next campaign, an army of twenty-five thousand men; and that such numbers of militia might be added to this continental force, as would render it competent to any enterprise against the posts occupied by the British within the United States.

Assurances were also given that ample supplies of provisions for the combined armies should be laid up in magazines under the direction of congress. The French minister addressed congress on this subject about the time that General Washington expressed so strongly, the necessity of knowing with certainty, on what reinforcements he was to calculate.

Thus pressed by their general and their ally, congress renewed their urgent requisitions on the states, and desired the several governments to correspond weekly with the committee at head quarters, on the progress made in complying with them.

In the mean time, General Washington meditated unceasingly on the course to be pursued in the various contingencies which might happen; and endeavoured to prepare for any plan of operations which circumstances might render adviseable. The arrival of Sir Henry Clinton, diminished the variety of aspects in which the relative situation of the two armies was to be contemplated, and rendered the success of an attempt on New York more doubtful. It was now thought adviseable that the armament from France, instead of sailing directly to the Hook, should proceed in the first instance to Rhode Island; where, after disembarking the troops, and providing for the sick, it might wait until a definitive plan of operation should be concerted.

On the 13th of July, while the result of the measures adopted by the several states remained uncertain, the French fleet entered the harbour of Newport, and letters were soon afterwards received from the Count de Rochambeau and the Chevalier Ternay, the officers commanding the land and naval forces, transmitting to General Washington an account of their arrival, of their strength, their expectations, and their orders.

The troops designed to serve in the United States had assembled, early in the year, at Brest; but the transports at that place having been chiefly employed for an armament destined for the West Indies; and the ports from which it had been intended to draw others, being blockaded, only the first division, consisting of five thousand men, had arrived at Newport; but letters from France contained assurances that the second division of the army might soon be expected.

To obviate those difficulties which had occurred on former occasions respecting rank, the orders given to Lieutenant General Count de Rochambeau, which were inclosed in his first letter, placed him entirely under the command of General Washington. The French troops were to be considered as auxiliaries, and were, according to the usages of war, to cede the post of honour to the Americans.[1]

Convinced that cordial harmony between the allied forces was essential to their success, both generals cultivated carefully the friendly dispositions felt by the troops towards each other. Warm professions of reciprocal respect, esteem, and confidence, were interchanged between them; and each endeavoured to impress on the other, and on all the military and civil departments, the conviction that the two nations, and two armies, were united by the ties of interest and affection. On this occasion, General Washington recommended to his officers, as a symbol of friendship and affection for their allies, to engraft on the American cockade, which was black, a white relief, that being the colour of the French cockade.

Late as was the arrival of the French troops, they found the Americans unprepared for active and offensive operations. Not even at that time were the numbers ascertained which would be furnished by the states. Yet it was necessary for General Washington to communicate a plan of the campaign to the Count de Rochambeau.

The season was already so far advanced that preparations for the operations contemplated eventually, on the arrival of the second division of the French fleet, must be immediately made, or there would not be time, though every circumstance should prove favourable, to execute the design against New York. Such a state of things so ill comported with the engagements of congress, and with the interests of the nation, that, trusting to his being enabled, by the measures already taken by the states, to comply with what was incumbent on him to perform, he determined to hazard much rather than forego the advantages to be derived from the aids afforded by France. In communicating this resolution to congress, he said—"Pressed on all sides by a choice of difficulties in a moment which required decision, I have adopted that line of conduct which comported with the dignity and faith of congress, the reputation of these states, and the honour of our arms. I have sent on definitive proposals of co-operation to the French general and admiral. Neither the period of the season, nor a regard to decency, would permit delay. The die is cast, and it remains with the states either to fulfil their engagements, preserve their credit, and support their independence, or to involve us in disgrace and defeat. Notwithstanding the failures pointed out by the committee, I shall proceed on the supposition that they will, ultimately, consult their own interest and honour; and not suffer us to fail for the want of means which it is evidently in their power to afford. What has been done, and is doing, by some of the states, confirms the opinion I have entertained of sufficient resources in the country. Of the disposition of the people to submit to any arrangement for bringing them forth, I see no reasonable ground to doubt. If we fail for want of proper exertions in any of the governments, I trust the responsibility will fall where it ought; and that I shall stand justified to congress, my country, and the world."

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[1] These orders were given at the instance of General La Fayette.—*Correspondence with General La Fayette.*

A decisive naval superiority however was considered as the basis of any enterprise to be undertaken by the allied arms. This naval superiority being assumed, the outlines of the plan were drawn, and the 5th of August was named as the day on which the French troops should re-embark, and the American army assemble at Morrissania.

This plan was committed to Major General the Marquis de Lafayette, who was authorized to explain the situation to the American army, and the views of the General, to the Count de Rochambeau. It was to be considered as preliminary to any operation—that the fleet and army of France should continue their aid until the enterprise should succeed, or be abandoned by mutual consent.

The Chevalier de Ternay did not long maintain his superiority at sea. Three days after he reached Newport, Admiral Greaves arrived with six ships of the line, and transferred it to the British. On his appearance off the Hook, Arbuthnot passed the bar with four ships of the line; and hearing that De Ternay had reached Rhode Island, proceeded thither, and cruised off the harbour. The Count de Rochambeau had been put into possession of all the forts and batteries about Newport, and the fleet had been moved in a line so as to co-operate with the land forces. This position appearing too formidable to be attempted by the fleet alone, Arbuthnot continued to cruise off Block Island.

As the commanders of the allied forces still cherished the hope of acquiring a superiority at sea, the design on New York was only suspended. This hope was strengthened by intelligence that the Count de Guichen had been joined in the West Indies by a powerful Spanish armament. The Chevalier de Ternay had despatched a packet to inform him that he was blocked up by a superior force, and to solicit such reinforcements as the situation of the Count might enable him to spare. Relying on the success of this application, and on the arrival of the second division of the squadron from Brest, the American general impatiently expected the moment when De Ternay would be enabled to act offensively.

In this crisis of affairs, a derangement took place in a most important department, which threatened to disconcert the whole plan of operations, though every other circumstance should prove favourable.

The immense expenditure of the quartermaster's department —the inadequacy of the funds with which it was supplied—the reciprocal disgusts and complaints produced by these causes, had determined congress to make still another radical change in the system. This subject had been taken up early in the winter; but such were the delays inseparable from the proceedings of the government, that the report of the committee was not made until the month of March, nor finally decided on until the middle of July.

This subject was too interesting to the army, and to the important operations meditated for the campaign, not to engage the anxious attention of the Commander-in-chief. At his request, the quartermaster general, while the army lay in winter quarters, repaired to Philadelphia for the purpose of giving congress all the information he possessed. He proposed to withdraw the management of the department almost entirely from the civil government, and to place it under the control of the person who should be at its head, subject only to the direction of the Commander-in-chief.

The views of congress were entirely different. While the subject remained suspended before that body, it was taken up by the committee of co-operation at head quarters, where the combined experience and talents of Generals Washington, Schuyler, and Greene, were employed in digesting a system adapted to the actual situation of the United States, which was recommended to congress. To give the more weight to his opinion by showing its disinterestedness, General Greene offered to continue in the discharge of the duties assigned to him without any other extra emolument than his family expenses. This plan, whatever might have been its details, was, in its general outlines, unacceptable to congress. A system was, at length, completed by that body, which General Greene believed to be incapable of execution. Resolving not to take upon himself the responsibility of measures the issue of which must be calamitous and disgraceful, he determined to withdraw from a station in which he despaired of being useful.

Apprehending the worst consequences from his resignation in so critical a moment, General Washington pressed him to suspend this decisive step, until the effect of an application from himself and from the committee of co-operation should be known. Their representations produced no effect. The resolution to make this bold experiment was unalterable. General Greene's resignation was accepted; and the letter conveying it excited so much irritation, that a design was intimated of suspending his command in the line of the army. But these impressions soon wore off, and the resentment of the moment subsided. Colonel Pickering, who succeeded General Greene, possessed, in an eminent degree, those qualities which fitted him to combat and subdue the difficulties of his department. To great energy of mind and body, he added a long experience in the affairs of the continent, with an ardent zeal for its interests; and General Greene himself, with several of the former officers, at the request of the Commander-in-chief, continued for some time after their resignation, to render all the services in their power; but there was a defect of means, for which neither talents nor exertion could compensate.

In the commissary department the same distress was experienced. General Washington was driven to the necessity of emptying the magazines at West Point, and of foraging on a people whose means of subsisting themselves were already nearly exhausted by the armies on both sides. The inadequate supplies drawn from these sources afforded but a short relief; and, once more, at a time when the public imagination was contemplating brilliant plans, the execution of which required steady courage with persevering labour, and consequently ample magazines, the army was frequently reduced to the last extremity by the want of food.

So great were the embarrassments produced by the difficulty of procuring subsistence that, although the second division of the fleet from Brest was daily expected, General Washington found it necessary to countermand the orders under which the militia were marching to camp.

Such was the state of preparation for the campaign, when intelligence was brought by the Alliance frigate that the port of Brest was blockaded. In the hope, however, that the combined fleets of France and Spain would be able to raise the blockade, General Washington adhered steadily to his purpose respecting New York, and continued his exertions to provide the means for its execution. The details of the plan of co-operation continued to be the subject of a correspondence with the Count de Rochambeau, and the Chevalier de Tunay; and, at length, a personal interview was agreed upon, to take place on the 21st of September, at Hartford, in Connecticut.

In this interview, ulterior eventual measures, as well as an explicit and detailed arrangement for acting against New York, were the subjects of consideration. No one of the plans, however, then concerted for the present campaign, was carried into execution. All, except an invasion of Canada, depended on a superiority at sea, which was soon rendered almost hopeless by certain information that the Count de Guichen had sailed for Europe.

Not long after receiving this information, Admiral Rodney arrived at New York with eleven ships of the line and four frigates. This reinforcement not only disconcerted all the plans of the allies, but put it in the power of the British to prosecute in security their designs in the south.

It may well be supposed that the Commander-in-chief did not relinquish, without infinite chagrin, the sanguine expectations he had formed of rendering this summer decisive of the war. Never before had he indulged so strongly the hope of happily terminating the contest. In a letter to an intimate friend, this chagrin was thus expressed. "We are now drawing to a close an inactive campaign, the beginning of which appeared pregnant with events of a very favourable complexion. I hoped, but I hoped in vain, that a prospect was opening which would enable me to fix a period to my military pursuits, and restore me to domestic life. The favourable disposition of Spain, the promised succour from France, the combined force in the West Indies, the declaration of Russia (acceded to by other powers of Europe, humiliating the naval pride and power of Great Britain) the superiority of France and Spain by sea in Europe, the Irish claims and English disturbances, formed in the aggregate an opinion in my breast, (which is not very susceptible of peaceful dreams) that the hour of deliverance was not far distant; for that, however unwilling Great Britain might be to yield the point, it would not be in her power to continue the contest. But alas! these prospects, flattering as they were, have proved delusive; and I see nothing before us but accumulating distress. We have been half of our time without provisions, and are likely to continue so. We have no magazines, nor money to form them. We have lived upon expedients until we can live no longer. In a word, the history of the war is a history of false hopes and temporary devices, instead of system and economy. It is in vain, however, to look back, nor is it our business to do so. Our case is not desperate, if virtue exists in the people, and there is wisdom among our rulers. But to suppose that this great revolution can be accomplished by a temporary army; that this army will be subsisted by state supplies; and that taxation alone is adequate to our wants, is in my opinion absurd, and as unreasonable as to expect an inversion of the order of nature to accommodate itself to our views. If it were necessary, it could be easily proved to any person of a moderate understanding, that an annual army, or any army raised on the spur of the occasion, besides being unqualified for the end designed, is, in various ways that could be enumerated, ten times more expensive than a permanent body of men under good organization and military discipline; which never was, nor will be the case with raw troops. A thousand arguments, resulting from experience and the nature of things, might also be adduced to prove that the army, if it is to depend upon state supplies, must disband or starve, and that taxation alone (especially at this late hour) can not furnish the means to carry on the war. Is it not time to retract from error, and benefit by experience? Or do we want farther proof of the ruinous system we have pertinaciously adhered to."

CHAPTER XIX

WHILE the public mind was anticipating great events from the combined arms of France and America, treason lay concealed in the American camp, and was plotting the ruin of the American cause. 1780.

The great services and military talents of General Arnold, his courage in battle, and patient fortitude under excessive hardships, had secured to him a high place in the opinion of the army and of his country.

Not having sufficiently recovered from the wounds received before Quebec and at Saratoga to be fit for active service, and having large accounts to settle with the government which required leisure, he was, on the evacuation of Philadelphia in 1778, appointed to the command in that place.

Unfortunately, that strength of principle and correctness of judgment, which might enable him to resist the various seductions to which his fame and rank exposed him in the metropolis of the union, were not associated with the firmness which he had displayed in the field, and in the most adverse circumstances. Yielding to the temptations of a false pride, and forgetting that he did not possess the resources of private fortune, he indulged in the pleasures of a sumptuous table and expensive equipage, and soon swelled his debts to an amount which it was impossible to discharge. Unmindful of his military character, he engaged in speculations which were unfortunate; and with the hope of immense profit, took shares in privateers which were unsuccessful. His claims against the United States were great, and he looked to them for the means of extricating himself from the embarrassments in which his indiscretions had involved him; but the commissioners to whom his accounts were referred for settlement, had reduced them considerably; and, on his appeal from their decision to congress, a committee reported that the sum allowed by the commissioners was more than he was entitled to receive.

He was charged with various acts of extortion on the citizens of Philadelphia, and with peculating on the funds of the continent. Not the less soured by these multiplied causes of irritation, from the reflection that they were attributable to his own follies and vices, he gave full scope to his resentments, and indulged himself in expressions of angry reproach against, what he termed, the ingratitude of his country, which provoked those around him, and gave great offence to congress. Having become peculiarly odious to the government of Pennsylvania, the Executive of that state exhibited formal charges against him to congress, who directed that he should be arrested and brought before a court martial. His trial was concluded late in January, 1779, and he was sentenced to be reprimanded by the Commander-in-chief. This sentence was approved by congress and carried into execution.

From the time the sentence against him was approved, if not sooner, his proud, unprincipled spirit revolted from the cause of his country, and determined him to seek an occasion to make the objects of his resentment, the victims of his vengeance. Turning his eyes on West Point as an acquisition which would give value to treason, and inflict a mortal wound on his former friends, he sought the command of that fortress for the purpose of gratifying both his avarice and his hate.[1]

To New York, the safety of West Point was peculiarly interesting; and, in that state, the reputation of Arnold was particularly high. To its delegation he addressed himself; and one of its members had written a letter to General Washington, suggesting doubts respecting the military character of Howe, to whom its defence was then entrusted, and recommended Arnold for that service. This request was not forgotten. Some short time afterwards, General Schuyler mentioned to the Commander-in-chief a letter he had received from Arnold intimating his wish to join the army, but stating his inability, in consequence of his wounds, to perform the active duties of the field. General Washington observed that, as there was a prospect of a vigorous campaign, he should be gratified with the aid of General Arnold. That so soon as the operations against New York should commence, he designed to draw his whole force into the field, leaving even West Point to the care of invalids and a small garrison of militia. Recollecting however the former application of a member of congress respecting this post, he added, that "if, with this previous information, that situation would be more agreeable to him than a command in the field, his wishes should certainly be indulged."

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[1] The author is informed by General Lafayette that Arnold, while commanding at West Point, endeavoured to obtain from General Washington the names of his secret emissaries in New York, and his means of communicating with them. He pressed Lafayette, who had also his private intelligencers, for the same information. His applications were of course unsuccessful. It cannot be doubted that his object was to commit the additional crime of betraying them to Sir Henry Clinton.

This conversation being communicated to Arnold, he caught eagerly at the proposition, though without openly discovering any solicitude on the subject; and, in the beginning of August, repaired to camp, where he renewed the solicitations which had before been made indirectly.

At this juncture, Sir Henry Clinton embarked on an expedition he meditated against Rhode Island, and General Washington was advancing on New York. He offered Arnold the left wing of the army, which that officer declined under the pretexts mentioned in his letter to General Schuyler.

Incapable of suspecting a man who had given such distinguished proofs of courage and patriotism, the Commander-in-chief was neither alarmed at his refusal to embrace so splendid an opportunity of recovering the favour of his countrymen, nor at the embarrassment accompanying that refusal. Pressing the subject no farther, he assented to the request which had been made, and invested Arnold with the command of West Point. Previous to his soliciting this station, he had, in a letter to Colonel Robinson, signified his change of principles, and his wish to restore himself to the favour of his Prince by some signal proof of his repentance. This letter opened the way to a correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton, the immediate object of which, after obtaining the appointment he had solicited, was to concert the means of delivering the important post he commanded to the British general.

Major John André, an aid-de-camp of Sir Henry Clinton, and adjutant general of the British army, was selected as the person to whom the maturing of Arnold's treason, and the arrangements for its execution should be entrusted. A correspondence was carried on between them under a mercantile disguise, in the feigned names of Gustavus and Anderson; and, at length, to facilitate their communications, the Vulture sloop of war moved up the North River, and took a station convenient for the purpose, but not so near as to excite suspicion.

The time when General Washington met the Count de Rochambeau at Hartford was selected for the final adjustment of the plan; and, as a personal interview was deemed necessary, Major André came up the river, and went on board the Vulture.

Sept. The house of a Mr. Smith, without the American posts, was appointed for the interview; and to that place both parties repaired in the night—André being brought under a pass for John Anderson, in a boat despatched from the shore. While the conference was yet unfinished, day light approached; and, to avoid discovery, Arnold proposed that André should remain concealed until the succeeding night. He is understood to have refused peremptorily to be carried within the American posts; but the promise to respect this objection was not observed. They continued together the succeeding day; and when, in the following night, his return to the Vulture was proposed, the boatmen refused to carry him because she had shifted her station during the day, in consequence of a gun which was moved to the shore without the knowledge of Arnold, and brought to bear upon her. This embarrassing circumstance reduced him to the necessity of endeavouring to reach New York by land. To accomplish this purpose, he reluctantly yielded to the urgent representations of Arnold; and, laying aside his regimentals, which he had hitherto worn under a surtout, put on a plain suit of clothes, and received a pass from General Arnold, authorizing him, under the name of John Anderson, to proceed on the public service to the White Plains, or lower if he thought proper.

With this permit, he had passed all the guards and posts on the road unsuspected, and was proceeding to New York in perfect security, when one of three militia men who were employed between the lines of the two armies, springing suddenly from his covert into the road, seized the reins of his bridle, and stopped his horse. Losing his accustomed self-possession, Major

André, instead of producing the pass[1] from General Arnold, asked the man hastily where he belonged? He replied "to below;" a term implying that he was from New York. "And so," said André, not suspecting deception, "am I." He then declared himself to be a British officer on urgent business, and begged that he might not be detained. The appearance of the other militia men disclosed his mistake, too late to correct it. He offered a purse of gold, and a valuable watch, with tempting promises of ample reward from his government, if they would permit him to escape; but his offers were rejected, and his captors proceeded to search him. They found concealed in his boots, in Arnold's hand writing, papers containing all the information which could be important respecting West Point. When carried before Lieutenant Colonel Jameson, the officer commanding the scouting parties on the lines, he still maintained his assumed character, and requested Jameson to inform his commanding officer that Anderson was taken. Jameson despatched an express with this communication. On receiving it, Arnold comprehended the full extent of his danger, and, flying from well merited punishment, took refuge on board the Vulture.

When sufficient time for the escape of Arnold was supposed to have elapsed, André, no longer affecting concealment, acknowledged himself to be the adjutant general of the British army. Jameson, seeking to correct the mischief of his indiscreet communication to Arnold, immediately despatched a packet to the Commander-in-chief containing the papers which had been discovered, with a letter from André, relating the manner of his capture, and accounting for the disguise he had assumed.

The express was directed to meet the Commander-in-chief, who was then on his return from Hartford; but, taking different roads,[2] they missed each other, and a delay attended the delivery of the papers, which insured the escape of Arnold.

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[1] Mr. Johnson says he did produce it; but that, on being surprised, he had thrust a paper containing a plan of the route in his boot, which, having been perceived, was demanded, and led to his discovery.

[2] General Lafayette adds some circumstances which are not found among the manuscript papers of General Washington. The Commander-in-chief with Generals Lafayette and Knox had turned from the direct route in order to visit a redoubt. Colonels Hamilton and M'Henry, the aids-de-camp of Generals Washington and Lafayette, went forward to request Mrs. Arnold not to wait breakfast. Arnold received André's billet in their presence. He turned pale, left them suddenly, called his wife, communicated the intelligence to her and left her in a swoon, without the knowledge of Hamilton and M'Henry. Mounting the horse of his aid-de-camp, which was

Every precaution was immediately taken for the security of West Point; after which, the attention of the Commander-in-chief was turned to André. A board of general officers, of which Major General Greene was president, and the two foreign generals, Lafayette and Steuben, were members, was called, to report a precise state of his case, and to determine the character in which he was to be considered, and the punishment to which he was liable.

The frankness and magnanimity with which André had conducted himself from the time of his appearance in his real character, had made a very favourable impression on all those with whom he had held any intercourse. From this cause he experienced every mark of indulgent attention which was compatible with his situation; and, from a sense of justice as well as of delicacy, was informed, on the opening of the examination, that he was at liberty not to answer any interrogatory which might embarrass his own feelings. But, as if only desirous to rescue his character from imputations which he dreaded more than death, he confessed every thing material to his own condemnation, but would divulge nothing which might involve others.

The board reported the essential facts which had appeared, with their opinion that Major André was a spy, and ought to suffer death. The execution of this sentence was ordered to take place on the day succeeding that on which it was pronounced.

Superior to terrors of death, but dreading disgrace, André was deeply affected by the mode of execution which the laws of war decree to persons in his situation. He wished to die like a soldier, not as a criminal. To obtain a mitigation of his sentence in this respect, he addressed a letter[1] to General Washington, replete with the feelings of a man of sentiment and honour. But the

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ready saddled, and directing him to inform General Washington on his arrival that Arnold was gone to receive him at West Point, he gained the river shore, and was conveyed in a canoe to the Vulture.

The Commander-in-chief, on his arrival, was informed that Arnold awaited him at West Point. Taking it for granted that this step had been taken to prepare for his reception, he proceeded thither without entering the house, and was surprised to find that Arnold was not arrived. On returning to the quarters of that officer he received Jameson's despatch, which disclosed the whole mystery.

[1] See note XVII at the end of the volume.

occasion required that the example should make its full impression, and this request could not be granted. He encountered his fate with composure and dignity; and his whole conduct interested the feelings of all who witnessed it.

Oct. 2.

The general officers lamented the sentence which the usages of war compelled them to pronounce; and never perhaps did the Commander-in-chief obey with more reluctance the stern mandates of duty and policy. The sympathy excited among the American officers by his fate, was as universal as it is unusual on such occasions; and proclaims alike the merit of him who suffered, and the humanity of those who inflicted the punishment.

Great exertions were made by Sir Henry Clinton, to whom André was particularly dear, first, to have him considered as protected by a flag of truce, and afterwards, as a prisoner of war.

Even Arnold had the hardihood to interpose. After giving a certificate of facts tending, as he supposed, to exculpate the prisoner, exhausting his powers of reasoning on the case, and appealing to the humanity of the American general, he sought to intimidate that officer, by stating the situation of many of the most distinguished individuals of South Carolina, who had forfeited their lives, but had hitherto been spared through the clemency of the British general. This clemency, he said, could no longer be extended to them should Major André suffer.

It may well be supposed that the interposition of Arnold could have no influence on Washington. He conveyed Mrs. Arnold to her husband in New York,[1] and also transmitted his clothes and baggage, for which he had written; but, in every other respect, his letters, which were unanswered, were also unnoticed.

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[1] General Lafayette mentions a circumstance not previously known to the author, which serves to illustrate the character of Washington, and to mark the delicacy of his feelings towards even the offending part of that sex which is entitled to all the consolation and protection man can afford it.

The night after Arnold's escape, when his letter respecting André was received, the general directed one of his aids to wait on Mrs. Arnold, who was convulsed with grief, and inform her that he had done every thing which depended on him to arrest her husband, but that, not having succeeded, it gave him pleasure to inform her that her husband was safe. It is also honourable to the American character, that during the effervescence of the moment, Mrs. Arnold was permitted to go to Philadelphia, to take possession of her effects, and to proceed to New York under the protection of a flag, without receiving the slightest insult.

The mingled sentiments of admiration and compassion excited in every bosom for the unfortunate André, seemed to increase the detestation in which Arnold was held. "André," said General Washington in a private letter, "has met his fate with that fortitude which was to be expected from an accomplished man and a gallant officer; but I am mistaken if *at this time* Arnold is undergoing the torments of a mental hell. He wants feeling. From some traits[1] of his character which have lately come to my knowledge, he seems to have been so hardened in crime, so lost to all sense of honour and shame, that, while his faculties still enable him to continue his sordid pursuits, there will be no time for remorse."

From motives of policy, or of respect for his engagements, Sir Henry Clinton conferred on Arnold the commission of a brigadier general in the British service, which he preserved throughout the war. Yet it is impossible that rank could have rescued him from the contempt and detestation in which the generous, the honourable, and the brave, could not cease to hold him. It was impossible for men of this description to bury the recollection of his being a traitor, a sordid traitor, first the slave of his rage, then purchased with gold, and finally secured at the expense of the blood of one of the most accomplished officers in the British army.

His representations of the discontent of the country and of the army concurring with reports from other quarters, had excited the hope that the loyalists and the dissatisfied, allured by British gold, and the prospect of rank in the British service, would flock to his standard, and form a corps at whose head he might again display his accustomed intrepedity. With this hope he published an address to the inhabitants of America, in which he laboured to palliate his own guilt, and to increase their dissatisfaction with the existing state of things.

This appeal to the public was followed by a proclamation addressed "To the officers and soldiers of the continental army, who have the real interests of their country at heart, and who are determined to be no longer the tools and dupes of congress or of France."

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[1] This allusion is thus explained in a private letter from Colonel Hamilton—"This man (Arnold) is in every sense despicable. In addition to the scene of knavery and prostitution during his command in Philadelphia, which the late seizure of his papers has unfolded, the history of his command at West Point is a history of little as well as great villanies. He practised every dirty act of peculation, and even stooped to connexions with the suttlers to defraud the public."

The object of this proclamation was to induce the officers and soldiers to desert the cause they had embraced from principle, by holding up to them the very flattering offers of the British general, and contrasting the substantial emoluments of the British service with their present deplorable condition. He attempted to cover this dishonourable proposition with a decent garb, by representing the base step he invited them to take, as the only measure which could restore peace, real liberty, and happiness, to their country.

These inducements did not produce their intended effect. Although the temper of the army might be irritated by real suffering, and by the supposed neglect of government, no diminution of patriotism had been produced. Through all the hardships, irritations, and vicissitudes of the war, Arnold remains the solitary instance of an American officer who abandoned the side first embraced in this civil contest, and turned his sword upon his former companions in arms.

When the probable consequences of this plot, had it been successful, were considered, and the combination of apparent accidents by which it was discovered and defeated, was recollected, all were filled with awful astonishment; and the devout perceived in the transaction, the hand of Providence guiding America to independence.

The thanks of congress were voted to the three militia men [1] who had rendered this invaluable service; and a silver medal, with an inscription expressive of their fidelity and patriotism, was directed to be presented to each of them. In addition to this flattering testimonial of their worth, and as a farther evidence of national gratitude, a resolution was passed granting to each, two hundred dollars per annum during life, to be paid in specie or an equivalent in current money.

The efforts of General Washington to obtain a permanent military force, or its best substitute, a regular system for filling vacant ranks with draughts who should join the army on the first day of January in each year, were still continued. Notwithstanding the embarrassments with which congress was surrounded, it is not easy to find adequate reasons for the neglect of representations so interesting, and of recommendations apparently so essential to the safety of the United States.

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[1] Their names were John Paulding, David Williams, and Isaac Vanwert.

Private letters disclose the fact that two parties still agitated congress. One entered fully into the views of the Commander-in-chief. The other jealous of the army, and apprehensive of its hostility to liberty when peace should be restored, remained unwilling to give stability to its constitution by increasing the numbers who were to serve during the war. They seemed to dread the danger from the enemy to which its fluctuations would expose them, less than the danger which might be apprehended for the civil authority from its permanent character. They caught with avidity at every intelligence which encouraged the flattering hope of a speedy peace,[1] but entered reluctantly into measures founded on the supposition that the war might be of long duration. Perfectly acquainted with the extent of the jealousies entertained on this subject, although, to use his own expressions to a friend, "Heaven knows how unjustly," General Washington had foreborne to press the necessity of regular and timely reinforcements to his army so constantly and so earnestly as his own judgment directed. But the experience of every campaign furnished such strong additional evidences of the impolicy and danger of continuing to rely on temporary expedients, and the uncertainty of collecting a force to co-operate with the auxiliaries from France was so peculiarly embarrassing, that he at length resolved to conquer the delicacy by which he had been in some degree restrained, and to open himself fully on the subjects which he deemed more essential than any other to the success of the war.

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[1] The following extract from a private letter of General Washington to a member of congress, shows how sensible he was of the mischief produced by this temper. "The satisfaction I have in any successes that attend us, even in the alleviation of misfortunes, is always allayed by the fear that it will lull us into security. Supineness, and a disposition to flatter ourselves, seem to make parts of our national character. When we receive a check and are not quite undone, we are apt to fancy we have gained a victory; and when we do gain any little advantage, we imagine it decisive, and expect the war immediately to end. The history of the war is a history of false hopes and temporary expedients. Would to God they were to end here! This winter, if I am not mistaken, will open a still more embarrassing scene than we have yet experienced, to the southward. I have little doubt, should we not gain a naval superiority, that Sir Henry Clinton will detach to the southward to extend his conquests. I am far from being satisfied that we shall be prepared to repel his attempts."

In August, while looking anxiously for such a reinforcement to the Chevalier de Ternay as would give him the command of the American seas, and while uncertain whether the campaign might not pass away without giving a single advantage promised at its opening, he transmitted a letter to congress, fully and freely imparting his sentiments on the state of things.

As this letter contains an exact statement of American affairs, according to the view taken of them by General Washington, and a faithful picture of the consequences of the ruinous policy which had been pursued, drawn by the man best acquainted with them, copious extracts from it will, at least, be excused.

August.

After examining the sources of supplies for the campaign, he proceeds to say—"But while we are meditating offensive operations which may not be undertaken at all, or, being undertaken, may fail, I am persuaded congress are not inattentive to the present state of the army, and will view in the same light with me the necessity of providing in time against a period (the first of January) when one-half of our present force will dissolve. The shadow of an army that will remain, will have every motive, except mere patriotism, to abandon the service, without the hope which has hitherto supported them, of a change for the better. This is almost extinguished now, and certainly will not outlive the campaign, unless it finds something more substantial to rest upon. This is a truth of which every spectator of the distresses of the army can not help being convinced. Those at a distance may speculate differently; but on the spot an opinion to the contrary, judging human nature on the usual scale, would be chimerical.

The honourable the committee of congress, who have seen and heard for themselves, will add their testimony to mine; and the wisdom and justice of congress can not fail to give it the most serious attention. To me it will appear miraculous, if our affairs can maintain themselves much longer in their present train. If either the temper or the resources of the country will not admit of an alteration, we may expect soon to be reduced to the humiliating condition of seeing the cause of America, in America, upheld by foreign arms. The generosity of our allies has a claim to all our confidence, and all our gratitude; but it is neither for the honour of America, nor for the interest of the common cause, to leave the work entirely to them."

He then reviewed the resources of Great Britain; and, after showing her ability still to prosecute the war, added—"The inference from these reflections is, that we can not count upon a speedy end of the war; and that is the true policy of America not to content herself with temporary expedients, but to endeavour, if possible, to give consistency and solidity to her measures. An essential step to this will be immediately to devise a plan and put it in execution, for providing men in time to replace those who will leave us at the end of the year; and for subsisting and for making a reasonable allowance to the officers and soldiers.

"The plan for this purpose ought to be of general operation, and such as will execute itself. Experience has shown that a peremptory draught will be the only effectual one. If a draught for the war or for three years can be effected, it ought to be made on every account; a shorter period than a year is inadmissible.

"To one who has been witness to the evils brought upon us by short enlistments, the system appears to have been pernicious beyond description; and a crowd of motives present themselves to dictate a change. It may easily be shown that all the misfortunes we have met with in the military line, are to be attributed to this cause.

"Had we formed a permanent army in the beginning, which, by the continuance of the same men in service, had been capable of discipline, we never should have to retreat with a handful of men across the Delaware in 1776, trembling for the fate of America, which nothing but the infatuation of the enemy could have saved; we should not have remained all the succeeding winter at their mercy, with sometimes scarcely a sufficient body of men to mount the ordinary guards, liable at every moment to be dissipated, if they had only thought proper to march against us; we should not have been under the necessity of fighting at Brandywine with an unequal number of raw troops, and afterwards of seeing Philadelphia fall a prey to a victorious army; we should not have been at Valley Forge with less than half the force of the enemy, destitute of every thing in a situation neither to resist nor to retire; we should not have seen New York left with a handful of men, yet an overmatch for the main army of these states, while the principal part of their force was detached for the reduction of two of them; we should not have found ourselves this spring so weak as to be insulted by five thousand men, unable to protect our baggage and magazines, their security depending on a good countenance, and a want of enterprise in the enemy; we should not have been, the greatest part of the war, inferior to the enemy, indebted for our safety to their inactivity, enduring frequently the mortification of seeing inviting opportunities to ruin them, pass unimproved for want of a force which the country was completely able to afford; to see the country ravaged, our towns burnt, the inhabitants plundered, abused, murdered, with impunity from the same cause."

After presenting in detail the embarrassments under which the civil departments of the army also had laboured, in consequence of the expensiveness and waste inseparable from its temporary character, he proceeded to observe—"There is every reason to believe, that the war has been protracted on this account. Our opposition being less, made the successes of the enemy greater. The fluctuation of the army kept alive their hopes; and at every period of a dissolution of a considerable part of it, they have flattered themselves with some decisive advanages. Had we kept a permanent army on foot, the enemy could have had nothing to hope for, and would in all probability have listened to terms long since. If the army is left in its present situation, it must continue an encouragement to the efforts of the enemy; if it is put in a respectable one, it must have a contrary effect; and nothing I believe will tend more to give us peace the ensuing winter. Many circumstances will contribute to a negotiation. An army on foot, not only for another campaign, but for several campaigns, would determine the enemy to pacific measures, and enable us to insist upon favourable terms in forcible language. An army insignificant in numbers, dissatisfied, crumbling to pieces, would be the strongest temptation and they could have to try the experiment a little longer. It is an old maxim that the surest way to make a good peace is to be well prepared for war.

"I can not forbear returning in this place to the necessity of a more ample and equal provision for the army. The discontents on this head have been gradually matured to a dangerous extremity. There are many symptoms that alarm and distress me. Endeavours are using to unite both officers and men in a general refusal of the money, and some corps now actually decline receiving it. Every method has been taken to counteract it, because such a combination in the army would be a severe blow to our declining currency. The most moderate insist that the accounts of depreciation ought to be liquidated at stated periods, and certificates given by government for the sums due. They will not be satisfied with a general declaration that it shall be made good.

"I have often said, and I beg leave to repeat it, the half pay provision is in my opinion the most politic and effectual that can be adopted. On the whole, if something satisfactory be not done, the army (already so much reduced in officers by daily resignations as not to have a sufficiency to do the common duties of it) must either cease to exist at the end of the campaign, or will exhibit an example of more virtue, fortitude, self-denial, and perseverance, than has perhaps ever yet been paralleled in the history of human enthusiasm.

"The dissolution of the army is an event that can not be regarded with indifference. It would bring accumulated distress upon us; it would throw the people of America into a general consternation; it would discredit our cause throughout the world; it would shock our allies. To think of replacing the officers with others is visionary. The loss of the veteran soldiers could not be replaced. To attempt to carry on the war with militia against disciplined troops, will be to attempt what the common sense and common experience of mankind will pronounce to be impracticable. But I should fail in respect to congress to dwell on observations of this kind in a letter to them."

At length the committee presented their report, reorganizing the regiments, reducing their number, and apportioning on the several states their respective numbers to complete the establishment. This report, being approved by congress, was transmitted to the Commander-in-chief for his consideration. By this arrangement, the states were required to recruit their quotas for the war, and to bring them into the field by the first of January; but, if in any state, it should be found impracticable to raise the men for the war by the first day of December, it was recommended to such state to supply the deficiency with men engaged to serve for not less than one year.

In compliance with the request of congress, General Washington submitted his objections to the plan, in a long and respectful letter.

He recommended that legionary corps should be substituted in the place of regiments entirely of cavalry. He thought it more adviseable that the infantry attached to the cavalry should compose a part of the corps permanently, than that it should be drawn occasionally from the regiments of foot.

The reduction in the number of regiments appeared to him a subject of great delicacy. The last reduction, he said, had occasioned many to quit the service, independent of those who were discontinued; and had left durable seeds of discontent among those who remained. The general topic of declamation was, that it was as hard as dishonourable, for men who had made every sacrifice to the service, to be turned out of it, at the pleasure of those in power, without an adequate compensation. In the maturity to which their uneasiness had now risen from a continuance of misery, they would be still more impatient under an attempt of a similar nature.

It was not, he said, the intention of his remarks to discourage a reform, but to show the necessity of guarding against the ill effects which might otherwise attend it, by making an ample provision both for the officers who should remain in the service, and for those who should be reduced. This should be the basis of the plan; and without it, the most mischievous consequences were to be apprehended. He was aware of the difficulty of making a present provision sufficiently ample to give satisfaction; but this only proved the expediency of making one for the future, and brought him to that which he had so frequently recommended as the most economical, the most politic, and the most effectual, that could be devised; this was half pay for life. Supported by the prospect of a permanent provision, the officers would be tied to the service, and would submit to many momentary privations, and to those inconveniences, which the situation of public affairs rendered unavoidable. If the objection drawn from the principle that the measure was incompatible with the genius of the government should be thought insurmountable, he would propose a substitute, less eligible in his opinion, but which would answer the purpose. It was to make the present half pay for seven years, whole pay for the same period. He also recommended that depreciation on the pay received, should be made up to the officers who should be reduced.

No objection occurred to the measure now recommended, but the expense it would occasion. In his judgment, whatever would give consistency to the military establishment, would be ultimately favourable to economy. It was not easy to be conceived, except by those who had witnessed it, what an additional waste and increased consumption of every thing, and consequently what an increase of expense, resulted from laxness of discipline in an army; and where officers thought they did a favour by holding their commissions, and the men were continually fluctuating, to maintain discipline was impossible. Nothing could be more obvious to him than that a sound military establishment and real economy were the same. That the purposes of war would be greatly promoted by it was too clear to admit of argument. He objected also to the mode of effecting the reduction. This was by leaving it to the several states to select the officers who should remain in service. He regretted that congress had not thought proper to retain the reduction and incorporation of the regiments under their own discretion. He regretted that it should be left to the states, not only because it was an adherence to the state system, which in the arrangements of the army, he disapproved; but because also he feared it would introduce much confusion and discontent in a business which ought to be conducted with the greatest circumspection. He feared also that professing to *select* the officers to be retained in service would give disgust both to those who should be discontinued, and to those who should remain. The former would be sent away under the public stigma of inferior merit, and the latter would feel no pleasure in a present preference, when they reflected that, at some future period, they might experience a similar fate.

He wished with much sincerity that congress had been pleased to make no alteration in the term of service, but had confined their requisition to men who should serve for the war, to be raised by enlistment, draught, or assessment, as might be found necessary. As it now stood, there would be very few men for the war, and all the evils of temporary engagements would still be felt. In the present temper of the states, he entertained the most flattering hopes that they would enter on vigorous measures to raise an army for the war, if congress appeared decided respecting it; but if they held up a different idea as admissible, it would be again concluded that they did not think an army for the war essential. This would encourage the opposition of men of narrow, interested, and feeble tempers, and enable them to defeat the primary object of the revolution.

This letter was taken into consideration; and the measures it recommended were pursued in almost every particular. Even the two great principles which were viewed with most jealousy,—an army for the war, and half pay for life,—were adopted. It would have greatly abridged the calamities of America, could these resolutions have been carried into execution. Every effort for the purpose was made by the Commander-in-chief.

To place the officers of the army in a situation which would render their commissions valuable, and hold out to them the prospect of a comfortable old age, in a country saved by their blood, their sufferings, and the labours of their best years, was an object which had always been dear to the heart of General Washington, and he had seized every opportunity to press it on congress. That body had approached it slowly, taking step after step with apparent reluctance, as the necessity of the measure became more and more obvious.

The first resolution on the subject, passed in May, 1778, allowed to all military officers who should continue in service during the war, and not hold any office of profit under the United States or any of them, half pay for seven years, if they lived so long. At the same time the sum of eighty dollars, in addition to his pay, was granted to every non-commissioned officer and soldier who should serve to the end of the war. In 1779 this subject was resumed. After much debate, its farther consideration was postponed; and the officers and soldiers were recommended to the attention of their several states, with a declaration that their patriotism, valour, and perseverance, in defence of the rights and liberties of their country, had entitled them to the gratitude, as well as the approbation of their fellow citizens.

In 1780, a memorial from the general officers, depicting in strong terms the situation of the army, and requiring present support, and some future provision, was answered by a reference to what had been already done, and by a declaration "That patience, self-denial, fortitude and perseverance, and the cheerful sacrifice of time and health, are necessary virtues which both the citizen and soldier are called to exercise, while struggling for the liberties of their country; and that moderation, frugality and temperance, must be among the chief supports, as well as the brightest ornaments of that kind of civil government which is wisely instituted by the several states in this Union."

This philosophic lecture on the virtues of temperance to men who were often without food, and always scantily supplied, was ill calculated to assuage irritations fomented by the neglect which was believed to have been sustained. In a few days afterwards, the subject was brought again before congress, and a more conciliating temper was manifested. The odious restriction, limiting the half pay for seven years to those who should hold no post of profit under the United States or any of them, was removed; and the bounty allowed the men was extended to the widows and orphans of those who had died or should die in the service; at length, the vote passed which has been stated, allowing half pay for life to all officers who should serve in the armies of the United States to the end of the war.

Resolutions were also passed, recommending it to the several states to make up the depreciation on the pay which had been received by the army; and it was determined that their future services should be compensated in the money of the new emission, the value of which, it was supposed, might be kept up by taxes and by loans.

While the government of the union was thus employed in maturing measures for the preservation of its ability establishment, the time for action passed away without furnishing any material event. The hostile armies continued to watch each other until the season of the year forced them out of the field.

Just before retiring into winter quarters, a handsome enterprise was executed by Major Talmadge, of Colonel Sheldon's regiment of light dragoons. That gentleman had been generally stationed on the lines, on the east side of the North River, and had been distinguished for the accuracy of his intelligence.

He was informed that a large magazine of forage had been collected at Coram, on Long Island, which was protected by the militia of the country, the cruisers in the Sound, and a small garrison in its neighbourhood.

Nov. 21.

At the head of a detachment of eighty dismounted dragoons, under the command of Captain Edgar, and of eight or ten who were mounted, he passed the Sound where it was twenty miles wide, marched across the island in the night, and so completely surprised the fort, that his troops entered the works on three different sides before the garrison was prepared to resist them. The British took refuge in two houses connected with the fortifications, and commenced a fire from the doors and windows. These were instantly forced open; and the whole party, amounting to fifty-four, among whom were a lieutenant colonel, captain, and subaltern, were killed or taken. Stores to a considerable amount were destroyed, the fort was demolished, and the magazines were consumed by fire. The objects of the expedition being accomplished, Major Talmadge recrossed the Sound without having lost a man. On the recommendation of General Washington, congress passed a resolution, expressing a high sense of the merit of those engaged in the expedition.

No objects for enterprise presenting themselves, the troops were placed in winter quarters early in December. The Pennsylvania line was stationed near Morristown; the Jersey line about Pompton, on the confines of New York and New Jersey; and the troops belonging to the New England states, at West Point, and in its vicinity, on both sides the North River. The line of the state of New York remained at Albany, to which place it had been detached for the purpose of opposing an invasion from Canada.

Major Carlton, at the head of one thousand men, composed of Europeans, Indians, and Tories, had made a sudden irruption into the northern parts of New York, and taken forts Ann and George, with their garrisons. At the same time, Sir John Johnson, at the head of a corps composed of the same materials, appeared on the Mohawk. Several sharp skirmishes were fought in that quarter with the continental troops, and a regiment of new levies, aided by the militia of the country. General Clinton's brigade was ordered to their assistance; but before he could reach the scene of action, the invading armies had retired, after laying waste the whole country through which they passed.

While the disorder of the American finances, the exhausted state of the country, and the debility of the government, determined Great Britain to persevere in offensive war against the United States, by keeping alive, her hopes of conquest, Europe assumed an aspect not less formidable to the permanent grandeur of that nation, than hostile to its present views. In the summer of 1780, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, entered into the celebrated compact, which has been generally denominated "THE ARMED NEUTRALITY." Holland had also declared a determination to accede to the same confederacy; and it is not improbable that this measure contributed to the declaration of war which was made by Great Britain against that power towards the close of the present year.

The long friendship which had existed between the two nations was visibly weakened from the commencement of the American war. Holland was peculiarly desirous of participating in that commerce which the independence of the United States would open to the world; and, from the commencement of hostilities, her merchants, especially those of Amsterdam, watched the progress of the war with anxiety, and engaged in speculations which were profitable to themselves and beneficial to the United States. The remonstrances made by the British minister at the Hague against this conduct, were answered in the most amicable manner by the government, but the practice of individuals continued the same.

When the war broke out between France and England, a number of Dutch vessels trading with France, laden with materials for ship building, were seized, and carried into the ports of Great Britain, although the existing treaties between the two nations were understood to exclude those articles from the list of contraband of war. The British cabinet justified these acts of violence, and persisted in refusing to permit naval stores to be carried to her enemy in neutral bottoms. This refusal, however, was accompanied with friendly professions, with an offer to pay for the vessels and cargoes already seized, and with proposals to form new stipulations for the future regulation of that commerce.

The States General refused to enter into any negotiations for the modification of subsisting treaties; and the merchants of all the great trading towns, especially those of Amsterdam, expressed the utmost indignation at the injuries they had sustained. In consequence of this conduct, the British government required those succours which were stipulated in ancient treaties, and insisted that the *casus fœderis* had now occurred. Advantage was taken of the refusal of the States General to comply with this demand, to declare the treaties between the two nations at an end.

The temper produced by this state of things, inclined Holland to enter into the treaty for an armed neutrality; and, in November, the Dutch government acceded to it. Some unknown causes prevented the actual signature of the treaty on the part of the States General, until a circumstance occurred which was used for the purpose of placing them in a situation not to avail themselves of the aid stipulated by that confederacy to its members.

While Mr. Lee, one of the ministers of the United States, was on a mission to the courts of Vienna and Berlin, he fell in company with a Mr. John de Neufwille, a merchant of Amsterdam, with whom he held several conversations on the subject of a commercial intercourse between the two nations, the result of which was, that the plan of an eventual commercial treaty was sketched out, as one which might thereafter be concluded between them. This paper had received the approbation of the Pensionary Van Berkel, and of the city of Amsterdam, but not of the States General.

Mr. Henry Laurens, late president of congress, was deputed to the States General with this plan of a treaty, for the double purpose of endeavouring to complete it, and of negotiating a loan for the use of his government. On the voyage he was captured by a British frigate; and his papers, which he had thrown overboard, were rescued from the waves by a British sailor. Among them was found the plan of a treaty which has been mentioned, and which was immediately transmitted to Sir Joseph Yorke, the British minister at the Hague, to be laid before the government.

The explanations of this transaction not being deemed satisfactory by the court of London, Sir Joseph Yorke received orders to withdraw from the Hague, soon after which war was proclaimed against Holland.

This bold measure, which added one of the first maritime powers in Europe to the formidable list of enemies with whom Britain was already encompassed, was perhaps, not less prudent than courageous.

There are situations, to which only high minded nations are equal, in which a daring policy will conduct those who adopt it, safely through the very dangers it appears to invite; dangers which a system suggested by a timid caution might multiply instead of avoiding. The present was, probably, one of those situations. Holland was about to become a member of the armed neutrality, after which her immense navigation would be employed, unmolested, in transporting the property of the enemies of Britain, and in supplying them with all the materials for ship-building, or the whole confederacy must be encountered.

America, however, received with delight the intelligence that Holland also was engaged in the war: and founded additional hopes of its speedy termination on that event.

CHAPTER XX

In the South, Lord Cornwallis, after having nearly demolished the American army at Camden, found himself under the necessity of suspending, for a few weeks, the new career of conquest on which he had intended to enter. 1780. His army was enfeebled by sickness as well as by action; the weather was intensely hot, and the stores necessary for an expedition into North Carolina had not been brought from Charleston. In addition, a temper so hostile to the British interests had lately appeared in South Carolina as to make it unsafe to withdraw any considerable part of his force from that state, until he should subdue the spirit of insurrection against his authority. Exertions were made in other parts of the state, not inferior to those of Sumpter in the north-west. Colonel Marion, who had been compelled by the wounds he received in Charleston to retire into the country, had been promoted by Governor Rutledge to the rank of a brigadier general. As the army of Gates approached South Carolina, he had entered the north eastern parts of that state with only sixteen men; had penetrated into the country as far as the Santee; and was successfully rousing the well-affected inhabitants to arms, when the defeat of the 16th of August chilled the growing spirit of resistance which he had contributed to increase.

With the force he had collected, he rescued about one hundred and fifty continental troops who had been captured at Camden, and were on their way to Charleston. Though compelled, for a short time, to leave the state, he soon returned to it, and at the head of a few spirited men, made repeated excursions from the swamps and marshes in which he concealed himself, and skirmished successfully with the militia who had joined the British standard, and the small parties of regulars by whom they were occasionally supported.

His talents as a partisan, added to his knowledge of the country, enabled him to elude every attempt to seize him; and such was his humanity as well as respect for the laws, that no violence or outrage was ever attributed to the party under his command.

The interval between the victory of the 16th of August, and the expedition into North Carolina, was employed in quelling what was termed the spirit of revolt in South Carolina. The efforts of the people to recover their independence were considered as new acts of rebellion, and were met with a degree of severity which policy was supposed to dictate, but which gave a keener edge to the resentments which civil discord never fails to engender. Several of the most active militia men who had taken protections as British subjects, and entered into the British militia, having been afterwards found in arms, and made prisoners at Camden, were executed as traitors. Orders were given to officers commanding at different posts to proceed in the same manner against persons of a similar description; and these orders were, in many instances, carried into execution. A proclamation was issued for sequestering the estates of all those inhabitants of the province, not included in the capitulation of Charleston, who were in the service, or acting under the authority of congress, and of all those who, by an open avowal of what were termed rebellious principles, or by other notorious acts should manifest a wicked and desperate perseverance in opposing the re-establishment of royal authority.[1]

While taking these measures to break the spirit of independence, Lord Cornwallis was indefatigable in urging his preparations for the expedition into North Carolina.

The day after the battle near Camden, emissaries had been despatched into that state for the purpose of inviting the friends of the British government to take up arms. Meanwhile the utmost exertions were continued to embody the people of the country as a British militia; and Major Ferguson was employed in the district of Ninety Six, to train the most loyal inhabitants, and to attach them to his own corps.[2] After being employed for some time in Ninety Six, he was directed to enter the western parts of North Carolina, for the purpose of embodying the royalists in that quarter.

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[1] Rem.

[2] Sted.

The route marked out for the main army was from Camden, through the settlement of the Waxhaws to Charlottestown, in North Carolina. On the 8th of September Lord Cornwallis moved from Camden, and reached Charlotte late in that month, where he expected to be joined by Ferguson. But in attempting to meet him, Ferguson was arrested by an event as important as it was unexpected.

Colonel Clarke, a refugee from Georgia, had formed a plan for the reduction of Augusta, which was defended only by a few provincials, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Brown. About the time Lord Cornwallis commenced his march from Camden, Clarke advanced against Augusta, at the head of a body of irregulars whom he had collected in the frontiers of North and South Carolina, and invested that place. Brown made a vigorous defence; and the approach of Lieutenant Colonel Cruger with a reinforcement from Ninety Six, compelled Clarke to relinquish the enterprise, and to save himself by a rapid retreat. Intelligence of the transactions at Augusta was given to Ferguson, who, to favour the design of intercepting Clarke, moved nearer the mountains, and remained longer in that country than had been intended. This delay proved fatal to him. It gave an opportunity to several volunteer corps to unite, and to constitute a formidable force. The hardy mountaineers inhabiting the extreme western Sept. 25. parts of Virginia and North Carolina, assembled on horseback with their rifles, under Colonels Campbell, M'Dowell, Cleveland, Shelby, and Sevier, and moved with their accustomed velocity towards Ferguson. Sept. 26. On receiving notice of their approach, that officer commenced his march for Charlotte, despatching, at the same time, different messengers to Lord Cornwallis with information of his danger. These messengers being intercepted, no movement was made to favour his retreat.

When within about sixteen miles of Gilbert-town, where Ferguson was then supposed to lie, Col. M'Dowell Oct. 1. was deputed to Gates with a request that he would appoint a general officer to command them; and, in the mean time, Colonel Campbell of Virginia was choosen for that purpose. On reaching Gilbert-town, and finding that the British had commenced their retreat, it was determined to follow them with the utmost celerity. At the Cowpens, this party was joined by Colonels Williams, Tracy, and Branan, of South Carolina, with about four hundred men, who also gave information respecting the distance and situation of their enemy. About nine hundred choice men were selected, by whom the pursuit was continued through the night, and through a heavy rain; and, the next day, about three in the afternoon, they came within view of Ferguson, who, finding that he must be overtaken, had determined to await the attack on King's mountain, and was encamped on its summit,—a ridge five or six hundred yards long, and sixty or seventy wide.

Oct. 6.

Oct. 7.

The Americans, who had arranged themselves into three columns, the right commanded by Colonel Sevier and Major Winston, the centre by Colonels Campbell and Shelby, and the left by Colonels Cleveland and Williams, immediately rushed to the assault. The attack was commenced by the centre, while the two wings gained the flanks of the British line; and, in about five minutes, the action became general. Ferguson made several impetuous charges with the bayonet, which, against riflemen, were necessarily successful. But, before any one of them could completely disperse the corps against which is was directed, the heavy and destructive fire of the others, who pressed him on all sides, called off his attention to other quarters, and the broken corps was rallied, and brought back to the attack.

In the course of these successive repulses, the right and centre had become intermingled, and were both, by one furious charge of the bayonet, driven almost to the foot of the mountain. With some difficulty they were rallied and again brought into the action; upon which the British, in turn, gave way, and were driven along the summit of the ridge, on Cleveland and Williams, who still maintained their ground on the left. In this critical state of the action, Ferguson received a mortal wound, and instantly expired. The courage of his party fell with him, and quarter was immediately demanded.[1] The action continued rather more than an hour.

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[1] The details of this battle are chiefly taken from a paper signed by Colonels Campbell, Shelby, and Cleveland, and published in the Virginia Gazette of the 18th of November, 1780.

In this sharp action one hundred and fifty of Ferguson's party were killed on the spot, and about the same number were wounded. Eight hundred and ten, of whom one hundred were British troops, were made prisoners, and fifteen hundred stand of excellent arms were taken.

The Americans fought under cover of trees, and their loss was inconsiderable; but among the slain was Colonel Williams, who was greatly and justly lamented. As cruelty generally begets cruelty, the example set by the British at Camden was followed, and ten of the most active of the royalists were selected from the prisoners, and hung upon the spot. The victorious mountaineers, having accomplished the object for which they assembled, returned to their homes.

The destruction of this party arrested the progress of Lord Cornwallis in North Carolina, and inspired serious fears for the posts in his rear. He retreated to Wynnsborough, between Camden and Ninety Six, where he waited for reinforcements from New York. Oct. 14.

The victory obtained on the 16th of August having suggested views of more extensive conquest in the south, Sir Henry Clinton had determined to send a large reinforcement to the southern army. In the opinion that Lord Cornwallis could meet with no effectual resistance in the Carolinas, he had ordered the officer commanding this reinforcement to enter the Chesapeake in the first instance, and to take possession of the lower parts of Virginia, after which he was to obey the orders he should receive from Lord Cornwallis, to whom a copy of his instructions had been forwarded.

The detachment amounted to near three thousand men, under the command of General Leslie. It sailed on the 6th of October, and, entering James river after a short passage, took possession of the country on the south side as high as Suffolk. After a short time, Leslie drew in his out-posts, and began to fortify Portsmouth. At this place he received orders from Lord Cornwallis to repair to Charleston by water.

While Cornwallis waited at Wynnsborough for this reinforcement, the light corps of his army were employed in suppressing the parties which were rising in various quarters of the country, in opposition to his authority. Marion had become so formidable as to endanger the communication between Camden and Charleston. Tarlton was detached against him, and Marion was under the necessity of concealing himself in the swamps. From the unavailing pursuit of him through marshes which were scarcely penetrable, Tarlton was called to a different quarter, where an enemy supposed to be entirely vanquished, had reappeared in considerable force.

Sumpter had again assembled a respectable body of mounted militia, at the head of which he advanced towards the posts occupied by the British. On receiving intelligence of his approach, Earl Cornwallis formed a plan for surprising him in his camp on Broad river, the execution of which was committed to Major Wemyss. That officer marched from Wynnsborough at the head of a regiment of infantry and about forty dragoons, reached the camp of Sumpter several hours before day, and immediately charged the out piquet, which made but a slight resistance. Only five shot are said to have been fired, but from these Wemyss received two dangerous wounds which disabled him from the performance of his duty. The assailants fell into confusion, and were repulsed with the loss of their commanding officer and about twenty men. After this action, Sumpter crossed Broad river, and, having formed a junction with Clarke and Branan, threatened Ninety Six.

Nov.

Alarmed for the safety of that post, Earl Cornwallis recalled Tarlton, and ordered him to proceed against Sumpter. So rapid was his movement that he had nearly gained the rear of his enemy before notice of his return was received. In the night preceding the day on which he expected to effect his purpose, a deserter apprized Sumpter of the approaching danger, and that officer began his retreat. Tarlton, pursuing with his usual rapidity, overtook the rear guard at the ford of the Ennoree, and cut it to pieces; after which, fearing that Sumpter would save himself by passing the Tyger, he pressed forward, with, as he states, about two hundred and eighty cavalry and mounted infantry, and, in the afternoon, came within view of the Americans, who were arranged in order for battle.

Sumpter had reached the banks of the Tyger, when the firing of his videttes announced the approach of his enemy. He immediately posted his troops to great advantage

Nov. 20.

on a steep eminence, having their rear and part of their right flank secured by the river, and their left covered by a barn of logs, into which a considerable number of his men were thrown.

Tarlton, without waiting for his infantry, or for a field piece left with them in his rear, rushed to the charge with his usual impetuosity. After several ineffectual attempts to dislodge the Americans, he retired from the field with great precipitation and disorder, leaving ninety-two dead, and one hundred wounded.

After remaining in possession of the ground for a few hours, Sumpter, who was severely wounded in the action, crossed the Tyger, after which his troops dispersed. His loss was only three killed, and four wounded.

Availing himself of the subsequent retreat and dispersion of the American militia, Tarlton denominated this severe check a victory; while congress, in a public resolution, voted their thanks to General Sumpter and the militia he commanded, for this and other services which had been previously rendered.

The shattered remains of the army defeated near Camden, had been slowly collected at Hillsborough, and great exertions were made to reorganize and reinforce it. The whole number of continental troops in the southern army amounted to about fourteen hundred men.

On receiving intelligence that Lord Cornwallis had occupied Charlotte, Gates detached Smallwood to the Yadkin, with directions to post himself at the ford of that river, and to take command of all the troops in that quarter of the country. The more effectually to harass the enemy, a light corps was selected from the army and placed under the command of Morgan, now a brigadier general.

As Lord Cornwallis retreated, Gates advanced to Charlotte, Smallwood encamped lower down the Catawba on the road to Camden; and Morgan was pushed forward some distance in his front. In the expectation that farther active operations would be postponed until the spring, Gates intended to pass the winter in this position. Such was the arrangement of the troops when their general was removed.

On the 5th of November, without any previous indications of dissatisfaction, congress passed a resolution requiring the Commander-in-chief to order a court of inquiry on the conduct of General Gates as commander of the southern army, and to appoint some other officer to that command, until the inquiry should be made.

Washington, without hesitation, selected Greene for that important and difficult service. In a letter to congress recommending him to their support, he mentioned General Greene as "an officer in whose abilities, fortitude, and integrity, from a long and intimate experience of them, he had the most entire confidence." To Mr. Matthews, a delegate from South Carolina, he said, "You have your wish in the officer appointed to the southern command. I think I am giving you a general; but what can a general do without men, without arms, without clothing, without stores, without provisions?" About the same time the legion of Lee was ordered into South Carolina.

Greene hastened to the army he was to command; and, on the second of December, reached Charlotte, then its head quarters. Soon after his arrival in camp, he was gratified with the intelligence of a small piece of good fortune obtained by the address of Lieutenant Colonel Washington.

Smallwood, having received information that a body of royal militia had entered the country in which he foraged, for the purpose of intercepting his wagons, detached Morgan and Washington against them. Intelligence of Morgan's approach being received, the party retreated; but Colonel Washington, being able to move with more celerity than the infantry, resolved to make an attempt on another party, which was stationed at Rugely's farm, within thirteen miles of Camden. He found them posted in a logged barn, strongly secured by abbattis, and inaccessible to cavalry. Force being of no avail, he resorted to the following stratagem. Having painted the trunk of a pine, and mounted it on a carriage so as to resemble a field piece, he paraded it in front of the enemy, and demanded a surrender. The whole party, consisting of one hundred and twelve men, with Colonel Rugely at their head, alarmed at the prospect of a cannonade, surrendered themselves prisoners of war.[1]

To narrow the limits of the British army, and to encourage the inhabitants, Greene detached Morgan west of the Catawba, with orders to take a position near the confluence of the Pacolet with the Broad River. His party consisted of rather more than three hundred chosen continental troops, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Howard, of Maryland, of Washington's regiment of light dragoons, amounting to about eighty men, and of two companies of militia from the northern and western parts of Virginia commanded by Captains Triplet and Taite, which were composed almost entirely of old continental soldiers. He was also to be joined on Broad River by seven or eight hundred volunteers and militia commanded by General Davidson, and by Colonels Clarke and Few.

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[1] The author received this account both from General Morgan and Colonel Washington.

After making this detachment, Greene, for the purpose of entering a more plentiful country, advanced lower down the Pedee, and encamped on its east side, opposite the Cheraw hills. Lord Cornwallis remained at Wynnsborough, preparing to commence active operations, so soon as he should be joined by Leslie.

The position he occupied on the Pedee was about seventy miles from Wynnsborough, and towards the north of east from that place. The detachment commanded by Morgan had taken post at Grindal's ford on the Pacolet, one of the south forks of Broad River, not quite fifty miles north west of Wynnsborough. The active courage of his troops, and the enterprising temper of their commander, rendered him extremely formidable to the parties of royal militia who were embodying in that quarter of the country.

Supposing Morgan to have designs on Ninety Six, Lord Cornwallis detached Lieutenant Colonel Tarlton with his legion, part of two regiments of infantry, and a corps of artillery with two field pieces, consisting altogether of about one thousand men, across the Broad River, to cover that important post. As he lay between Greene and Morgan, he was desirous of preventing their junction, and of striking at one of them while unsupported by the other. To leave it uncertain against which division his first effort would be directed, he ordered Leslie to halt at Camden until the preparations for entering North Carolina should be completed. Having determined to penetrate into that state by the upper route, he put his army in motion and directed his course north westward, between the Catawba and Broad Rivers. Leslie was directed to

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move up the banks of the former, and to join him on the march; and Tarlton was ordered to strike at Morgan. Should that officer escape Tarlton, the hope was entertained that he might be intercepted by the main army.[1]

High waters delayed Cornwallis and Leslie longer than had been expected; but Tarlton overcame the same obstacles, and reached Morgan before a correspondent progress was made by the other divisions.[1]

The combined movements of the British army were communicated to General Morgan on the 14th of January. Perceiving the insecurity of his own position, he retired across the Jan. 16. Pacolet, the fords over which he was desirous of defending. But a passage of that river being effected at a ford about six miles below him, he made a precipitate retreat; and, on the evening of the same day, his pursuers occupied the camp he had abandoned. Morgan retired to the Cowpens, where he determined to risk a battle. It was believed that he might have crossed the Broad River, or have reached a mountainous country which was also near him, before he could have been overtaken; and the superiority of his adversary was so decided as to induce his best officers to think that every effort ought to be made to avoid an engagement. But Morgan had great and just confidence in himself and in his troops, he was unwilling to fly from an enemy not so decidedly his superior as to render it madness to fight him; and he also thought that, if he should be overtaken while his men were fatigued and retreating, the probability of success would be much less than if he should exhibit the appearance of fighting from choice.

These considerations determined him to halt earlier than was absolutely necessary.[2]

Tarlton, having left his baggage under a strong guard, with Jan. 17. orders not to move until break of day, recommenced the pursuit at three in the morning.

Before day, Morgan was informed of his approach, and prepared to receive him.

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[1] Letter of Lord Cornwallis.—*Stedman.*

[2] These reasons for his conduct were given to the author by General Morgan soon after his return from the southern campaign.

Although censured by many for having determined to fight, and by some for the ground he chose, all admit the judgment with which his disposition was made.

On an eminence, in an open wood, he drew up his continental troops, and Triplet's corps, deemed equal to continentals, amounting to between four and five hundred men, who were commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Howard. In their rear, on the descent of the hill, Lieutenant Colonel Washington was posted with his cavalry, and a small body of mounted Georgia militia commanded by Major M'Call, as a corps de reserve. On these two corps rested his hopes of victory, and with them he remained in person. The front line was composed entirely of militia, under the command of Colonel Pickens. Major M'Dowell, with a battalion of North Carolina volunteers, and Major Cunningham, with a battalion of Georgia volunteers, were advanced about one hundred and fifty yards in front of this line, with orders to give a single fire as the enemy approached, and then to fall back into the intervals, which were left for them in the centre of the first line. The militia, not being expected to maintain their ground long, were ordered to keep up a retreating fire by regiments, until they should pass the continental troops, on whose right they were directed again to form. His whole force, as stated by himself, amounted to only eight hundred men.

Soon after this disposition was made, the British van appeared in sight. Confident of a cheap victory, Tarlton formed his line of battle, and his troops rushed forward with great impetuosity, shouting as they advanced.

After a single well directed fire, M'Dowell and Cunningham fell back on Colonel Pickens, who, after a short but warm conflict, retreated into the rear of the second line.[1] The British pressed forward with great eagerness; and, though received by the continental troops with a firmness unimpaired by the route of the front line, continued to advance. Soon after the action with the continental troops had commenced, Tarlton ordered up his reserve. Perceiving that the enemy extended beyond him both on the right and left, and that, on the right especially, his flank was on the point of being turned, Howard ordered the company on his right to change its front, so as to face the British on that flank. From some mistake in the officer commanding this company, it fell back, instead of fronting the enemy, upon which the rest of the line, supposing a change of ground for the whole to have been directed, began to retire in perfect order. At this moment General Morgan rode up, and directed the infantry to retreat over the summit of the hill, about one hundred yards to the cavalry. This judicious but hazardous movement was made in good order, and extricated the flanks from immediate danger. Believing the fate of the day to be decided, the British pressed on with increased ardour, and in some disorder; and when the Americans halted, were within thirty yards of them. The orders then given by Howard to face the enemy were executed as soon as they were received; and the whole line poured in a fire as deadly as it was unexpected. Some confusion appearing in the ranks of the enemy, Howard seized the critical moment, and ordered a charge with the bayonet. These orders were instantly obeyed, and the British line was broken.

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[1] Some of them formed afterwards, and renewed the action on Howard's right.

At the same moment the detachment of cavalry on the British right was routed by Washington. The militia of Pickens, who rode to the ground, had tied their horses in the rear of Howard's left. When the front line was broken, many of them fled to their horses, and were closely pursued by the cavalry, who, while the continental infantry were retiring, passed their flank, and were cutting down the scattered militia in their rear. Washington, who had previously ordered his men not to fire a pistol, now directed them to charge the British cavalry with drawn swords. A sharp conflict ensued, but it was not of long duration. The British were driven from the ground with considerable slaughter, and were closely pursued. Both Howard and Washington pressed the advantage they had respectively gained, until the artillery, and great part of the infantry had surrendered. So sudden was the defeat, that a considerable part of the British cavalry had not been brought into action; and, though retreating, remained unbroken. Washington, followed by Howard with the infantry, pursued them rapidly, and attacked[1] them with great spirit; but, as they were superior to him in numbers, his cavalry received a temporary check; and in this part of the action he sustained a greater loss than in any other. But the infantry coming up to support him, Tarlton resumed the retreat.[2]

In this engagement upwards of one hundred British, including ten commissioned officers, were killed; twenty-nine commissioned officers, and five hundred privates were made prisoners. Eight hundred muskets, two field pieces, two standards, thirty-five baggage wagons, and one hundred dragoon horses, fell into the hands of the conquerors.

Tarlton retreated towards the head quarters of Lord Cornwallis, then about twenty-five miles from the Cowpens.

This complete victory cost the Americans less than eighty men in killed and wounded.

Seldom has a battle in which greater numbers were not engaged, been so important in its consequences as that of the Cowpens. Lord Cornwallis was not only deprived of a fifth of his numbers, but lost a most powerful and active part of his army. Unfortunately, Greene was not in a condition to press the advantage. The whole southern army did not much exceed two thousand men, a great part of whom were militia.

The camp of Lord Cornwallis at Turkey creek on the east side of Broad river, was as near as the Cowpens to the fords at which Morgan was to cross the Catawba. Of consequence, that officer had much cause to fear that, encumbered as he was with prisoners and military stores, he might be intercepted before he could pass that river. Comprehending the full extent of his danger, he abandoned the baggage he had taken, and leaving his wounded under the protection of a flag, detached the militia as an escort to his prisoners, and brought up the rear in person with his regulars. Passing Broad river on the evening of the day on which the battle was fought, he hastened to the Catawba, which he crossed on the 23d, at Sherald's ford, and encamped on its eastern bank.

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[1] In the eagerness of pursuit, Washington advanced near thirty yards in front of his regiment. Three British officers, observing this, wheeled about, and made a charge upon him. The officer on his right aimed a blow to cut him down as an American serjeant came up, who intercepted the blow by disabling his sword arm. The officer on his left was about to make a stroke at him at the same instant, when a waiter, too small to wield a sword, saved him by wounding the officer with a ball from a pistol. At this moment, the officer in the centre, who was believed to be Tarlton, made a thrust at him which he parried; upon which the officer retreated a few paces, and then discharged a pistol at him, which wounded his horse.

[2] The author has received statements of this action from General Morgan and from Colonels Howard and Washington.

Lord Cornwallis employed the 18th in forming a junction with Leslie. Early next morning he put his army in motion, and, on the 25th, reached Ramsay's mills, where the roads taken by the two armies unite. At this place, to accelerate his future movements, he destroyed his baggage; and, after collecting a small supply of provisions, resumed the pursuit. He reached Sherald's ford in the afternoon of the 29th; and, in the night, an immense flood of rain rendered the river impassable.

While Morgan remained on the Catawba, watching the motions of the British army, and endeavouring to collect the militia, General Greene arrived, and took command of the detachment.

In his camp on the Pedee, opposite the Cheraw hills, Greene had been joined by Lee's legion, amounting to about one hundred cavalry, and one hundred and twenty infantry. The day after his arrival, he was ordered to join Marion for the purpose of attempting to carry a British post at Georgetown, distant about seventy-five miles from the American army. The fort was surprised, but the success was only partial.

On receiving intelligence of the victory at the Cowpens, Greene detached Stevens' brigade of Virginia militia, whose terms of service were on the point of expiring, to conduct the prisoners to Charlottesville in Virginia, and turned his whole attention to the effecting of a junction between the two divisions of his army. It was principally with a view to this object that he hastened to the detachment under Morgan, leaving the other division to be commanded by General Huger.

Early in the morning of the first of February, Lord Cornwallis forced a passage over the Catawba, at a private ford which was defended by General Davidson, with about three hundred North Carolina militia. Davidson was killed, and his troops dispersed. They were followed by Tarlton, who, hearing in the pursuit, that several bodies of militia were assembling at a tavern about ten miles from the ford, hastened to the place of rendezvous, and charging them with his usual impetuosity, broke their centre, killed some, and dispersed the whole party.

It was found impracticable to bring the militia into the field, and Huger, who had been directed to march to Salisbury, was ordered to effect a junction between the two divisions of the army at some place farther north.

Greene retreated along the Salisbury road, and, in the evening of the third, crossed the Yadkin at the trading ford. His passage of the river, then already much swollen by the rain of the preceding day, was facilitated by boats which had been previously collected. The rear guard, which, being impeded by the baggage of the whigs who fled from Salisbury did not cross till midnight, was overtaken by the van of the British army, and a skirmish ensued in which some loss was sustained, but the Americans effected the passage of the river.

The rains having rendered the Yadkin unfordable, and the boats being collected on the opposite side, the pursuit was necessarily suspended; but Greene continued his march to Guilford court house where he was joined by Huger. Feb. 9.

After some delay, and apparent hesitation respecting his movements, Lord Cornwallis marched up the Yadkin, which he crossed near its source on the morning of the eighth.

After the junction between the divisions of Huger and Morgan, the infantry of the American army, including six hundred militia, amounted to about two thousand effectives; and the cavalry to between two and three hundred. Lord Cornwallis lay twenty-five miles above them at Salem, with an army estimated from twenty-five hundred to three thousand men, including three hundred cavalry. Having failed in his attempt to prevent the junction of the two divisions of the American army, his object was to place himself between Greene and Virginia, and force that officer to a general action before he could be joined by the reinforcements which were known to be preparing for him in that state. His situation favoured the accomplishment of this object.

Greene, on the other hand, was indefatigable in his exertions to cross the Dan without exposing himself to the hazard of a battle. To effect this object, the whole of his cavalry, with the flower of his infantry, amounting together to rather more than seven hundred men, were formed into a light corps, for the purpose of harassing and impeding the advance of the enemy, until the less active part of his force, with the baggage and military stores should be secured. Morgan being rendered incapable of duty by severe indisposition, the command of this corps was conferred on Colonel Otho H. Williams.

Lord Cornwallis had been informed that it would be impossible to obtain boats at the ferries on the Dan in sufficient numbers for the transportation of the American troops before he could overtake them. And, as the river could not be forded below, he calculated with confidence on succeeding in his object by keeping above Greene, and prevent his reaching those shallow fords by which alone it was thought possible to escape into Virginia.

Dix's ferry is about fifty miles from Guilford court house, and was almost equidistant from the two armies. Considerably below, and more than seventy miles from Guilford court house, were two other ferries, Boyd's and Irwin's, which were only four miles apart. By directing their march towards the lower and more remote ferries, the distance from Lord Cornwallis was so much ground gained; and by despatching an officer with a few men to Dix's, the boats at that, and at an intermediate ferry, might be brought down the river in time to meet the army at the intended crossing place. These facts being suggested by Lieutenant Colonel Carrington, quartermaster general for the southern department, the proposition was instantly adopted, and an officer despatched to bring the boats from above down to Boyd's ferry.[1]

The next day both armies resumed their line of march. While General Greene pressed forward to Boyd's, Williams gained an intermediate road leading to Dix's ferry, and thus placed himself between the two armies, a small distance in front of the one, and considerably in rear of the other. Such was the boldness and activity of this corps that Lord Cornwallis found it necessary to temper the eagerness of his pursuit with caution. Yet he moved with great rapidity;—marching nearly thirty miles each day. On the morning of the third day, he attempted to surprise the Americans by marching from the rear of his column into the road which had been taken by them, while his van proceeded slowly on its original route. Information of this movement was received, and Lieutenant Colonel Lee charged his advanced cavalry with such impetuosity, as to cut a company nearly to pieces. A captain and several privates were made prisoners. The whole British army turned into this road and followed in the rear of Williams, who used every effort to delay their march.

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[1] The author received this fact from Colonel Carrington.

The measures adopted by Greene for collecting the boats were successful; and, on the fourteenth, he effected the passage of his troops and stores.

When Williams supposed that the American army had reached the Dan, he left the road leading to Dix's ferry, and entering that which Greene had taken; urged his march to the lower ferries with the utmost celerity. Lord Cornwallis, being at length informed that Greene had taken the lower road, turned into it about the same time by a nearer way, and his front was in sight of the rear of Williams. So rapid were the movements of both armies that, in the last twenty-four hours, the Americans marched forty miles; and the rear had scarcely touched the northern bank, when the van of the enemy appeared on the opposite shore.

That General Greene was able to effect this retreat without loss, evidences the judgment with which he improved every favourable circumstance.

The exertions, the fatigues, the sufferings, and the patience of both armies, during this long, toilsome, and rapid pursuit, were extreme. Without tents, without spirits, often without provisions, and always scantily supplied with them; through deep and frozen roads, high waters, and frequent rains; each performed, without a murmur, the severe duties assigned to it. The difference between them consists only in this,—the British troops were well clothed; the Americans were almost naked, and many of them barefooted.

Great praise was bestowed by the general on his whole army; but the exertions of Colonel Williams, and of Lieutenant Colonel Carrington were particularly noticed.

Although that part of North Carolina through which the armies had passed, was well affected to the American cause, such was the rapidity with which they moved, and such the terror inspired by the presence of the enemy, that no aid was drawn from the militia. Indeed, those who had joined the army from the more remote parts of the country could not be retained; and, when it reached the Dan, the militia attached to it did not exceed eighty men.

Having driven Greene out of North Carolina, Lord Cornwallis turned his attention to the re-establishment of regal authority in that state. For this purpose, he proceeded by easy marches to Hillsborough, at that time its capital, where he erected the royal standard, and issued a proclamation inviting the inhabitants to repair to it, and to assist him in restoring the ancient government.

Feb. 18.

As soon as it was known that General Greene had entered Virginia, he was reinforced by six hundred militia drawn from the neighbouring counties, the command of which was given to General Stevens.

Apprehensive that Lord Cornwallis, if left in the undisturbed possession of North Carolina, would succeed, to the extent of his hopes; in recruiting his army and procuring the submission of the people, General Greene determined, on receiving this small reinforcement, to re-enter that state; and, avoiding a general engagement, to keep the field against a superior enemy, who had demonstrated his capacity for rapid movement and hardy enterprise.

On the 18th, while Lord Cornwallis remained on the opposite shore, the legion of Lee had passed the Dan. On the 21st, the light infantry also recrossed it; and, on the 23d, they were followed by the main body of the army.

The light infantry hung round the quarters of the enemy, while the main body advanced slowly, keeping in view the roads to the western parts of the country, from which a considerable reinforcement of militia was expected.[1]

General Greene was not mistaken in the consequences of leaving Lord Cornwallis in the peaceable possession of North Carolina. He was informed that seven independent companies were raised in one day. A large body of royalists had begun to embody themselves on the branches of the Haw river; and Colonel Tarlton, with the cavalry of his legion and some infantry, was detached from Hillsborough to favour their rising, and to conduct them to the British army.

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[1] The western militia had been engaged in a war with the Cherokee Indians, who, neglected by the United States, and incited by the British, had determined once more to take up the hatchet. The militia from the western parts of Virginia and North Carolina entered their country, burnt their towns, containing near one thousand houses, destroyed fifty thousand bushels of grain, killed twenty-nine men, took several prisoners, and compelled the nation to sue for peace.

Intelligence of the movements of the loyalists and of Tarlton being received, Greene ordered Lieutenant Colonel Lee with the cavalry of his legion, and General Pickens with between three and four hundred militia, who had just formed a junction near Hillsborough, to move against both parties.

Feb. 25.

In a long lane, Lee, whose cavalry was in front of the whole detachment, came up with the royalists. He was mistaken by them for Tarlton, whom they had not yet seen, to whose encampment they were proceeding, and whose corps was then taking refreshment, not much more than a mile distant from them. Perceiving their mistake, Lee received their expressions of joy and attachment, and had just reached their colonel, to whom he was about to make communications which might have enabled him to proceed on his design of surprising Tarlton, when the infantry who followed close in his rear, were recognised by the insurgents; and a firing took place between them. It being apparent that this circumstance must give the alarm to the British, Lee changed his plan, and turning on the royalists, who still supposed him to be a British officer, cut them to pieces while they were making protestations of loyalty, and asserting that they were "the very best friends of the king." More than one hundred, among whom was Colonel Pyle, their leader, fell under the swords of his cavalry. This terrible but unavoidable carnage broke, in a great measure, the spirits of the tories in that part of the country. Some who were on their march to join the British standard, returned, determined to await the issue of events before they went too far to recede.

The hope of surprising Tarlton being thus disappointed, Pickens and Lee determined to postpone the attack till the morning; and took a position for the night between him and a corps of militia which was advancing from the western counties of Virginia under Colonel Preston. Tarlton had meditated an attempt on this corps; but at midnight, when his troops were paraded to march on this design, he received an express from Lord Cornwallis, directing his immediate return to the army. In obedience to this order, he began his retreat long before day, and crossed the Haw, just as the Americans, who followed him, appeared on the opposite bank. Two pieces of artillery commanded the ford and stopped the pursuit.

Feb. 27. To approach more nearly the great body of the loyalists, who were settled between Haw and Deep rivers, and to take a position in a country less exhausted than that around Hillsborough, Lord Cornwallis crossed the Haw, and encamped on Allimance creek.

As the British army retired, General Greene advanced. Not being yet in a condition to hazard an engagement, he changed his ground every night. In the course of the critical movements, which were made in order to avoid an action, and at the same time to overawe the loyalists, and maintain a position favourable to a junction with the several detachments who were marching from different quarters to his assistance, he derived immense service from a bold and active light infantry, and from a cavalry which, though inferior in numbers, was rendered superior in effect to that of his enemy, by being much better mounted. They often attacked boldly and successfully, and made sudden incursions into the country, which so intimidated the royalists, that Lord Cornwallis found it difficult to obtain intelligence. By these means, all his attempts to bring the American general to action were frustrated; and his lordship was under the necessity of keeping his men close in their quarters.

March 6. During this hazardous trial of skill, Lord Cornwallis moved out in full force towards Reedy fork, where the light infantry lay, in the hope of surprising that corps under cover of a thick fog, and probably with ulterior views against General Greene. His approach was perceived, and a sharp skirmish ensued between a part of the light infantry, and a much superior body of British troops commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Webster, in which the loss was supposed to be nearly equal. The advance of the British army obliged Williams to retire; and General Greene, by recrossing the Haw and uniting with the light infantry on its north eastern bank at the Rocky ford, disappointed any farther designs which might have been formed against the army then under his command, or against the reinforcements which were approaching. Being thus foiled, Lord Cornwallis withdrew to Deep river, and General Greene fell back to the Iron-works on Troublesome creek.

At length his reinforcements, though much inferior to the number he had been taught to expect, were received, and Greene, in his turn, sought a battle. With this view, March 14. he dissolved the corps of light infantry, advanced towards his enemy, and encamped within eight miles of him, at Guilford court house.

His army, including officers, amounted to about four thousand five hundred men, of whom not quite two thousand were continental troops and the residue consisted of Virginia and North Carolina militia. Those of Virginia were commanded by Generals Stevens and Lawson, and by Colonels Preston, Campbell, and Lynch; and those of North Carolina, by Generals Butler and Eaton.

Of the four regiments which composed the continental infantry, only one, the first of Maryland, was veteran. The other three consisted of new levies, with a few old continental soldiers interspersed among them. The legion of Lee, and the cavalry of Washington, like the first regiment of Maryland, added every advantage of experience to approved courage; and nearly all the officers commanding the new levies were veteran.

Having determined to risk an action, Greene chose his ground with judgment. Early in the morning of the 15th, the fire of his reconnoitring parties announced the approach of the enemy on the great Salisbury road, and his army was immediately arranged in order of battle. It was drawn up in three lines, on a large hill, surrounded by other hills, chiefly covered with trees and underwood.

The front line was composed of the two brigades of North Carolina militia, who were posted to great advantage on the edge of the wood, behind a strong rail fence, with an extensive open field in front.

The two brigades of Virginia militia formed the second line.

They were drawn up entirely in the wood, about three hundred yards in rear of the first, and on either side of the great Salisbury road.

The third line was placed about three hundred yards in rear of the second, and was composed of continental troops. The Virginia brigade, commanded by General Huger, was on the right; that of Maryland, commanded by Colonel Williams, was on the left. They were drawn up obliquely, with their left diverging from the second line, and partly in open ground.

The first and third regiments of dragoons, amounting to one hundred and two troopers, Kirkwood's company of light infantry, and a regiment of militia riflemen under Colonel Lynch, formed a corps of observation for the security of the right flank, which was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Washington. The legion, consisting of one hundred and sixty-eight horse and foot, and a body of riflemen commanded by Colonels Campbell and Preston, formed a corps of observation for the security of the left flank, which was placed under Lieutenant Colonel Lee. The artillery was in the front line, in the great road leading through the centre, with directions to fall back as the occasion should require.

Though Lord Cornwallis was sensible that the numbers of the American army were greatly augmented by troops whose continuance in service would be of short duration, he deemed it so important to the interests of his sovereign to maintain the appearance of superiority in the field, that he was unwilling March 15. to decline the engagement now offered him. On the advance of Greene, therefore, he prepared for action; and early in the morning moved from his ground, determined to attack the adverse army wherever it should be found. About four miles from Guilford court house, the advance, led by Lieutenant Colonel Tarlton, fell in with Lee, and a sharp skirmish ensued, which was terminated by the appearance of such large bodies of British troops, as rendered it prudent for Lee to retire. His Lordship continued to advance until he came within view of the American army. His disposition for the attack was then made in the following order.

The seventy-first British regiment, with the German regiment of Bose, led by General Leslie, and supported by the first battalion of the guards under Colonel Norton, formed the right, and the twenty-third and thirty-third regiments, led by Lieutenant Colonel Webster, and supported by Brigadier General O'Hara with the grenadiers and second battalion of the guards, formed the left. The light infantry of the guards and the Yagers, posted in the wood on the left of the artillery, and the cavalry in column behind it in the road, formed a corps of observation.[1]

This disposition being made, the British troops advanced to the charge, with the cool, intrepidity which discipline inspires.

The North Carolina militia were not encouraged by the great advantages of their position to await the shock. They broke instantly; and, throwing away their arms and flying through the woods, sought their respective homes.

The British then advanced on the second line, which received them with more firmness; and maintained their ground for some time with great resolution. Lord Cornwallis perceiving the corps on his flanks, brought the whole of his reserved infantry into the line. On the right, General Leslie brought up the guards to oppose Lee; and, on the left, Webster changed his front to the left, and attacked Washington, while the grenadiers and second battalion of guards moved forward to occupy the place which he had just quitted.[2]

The ground being unfavourable to the action of horse, Washington had posted Lynch's riflemen, with whom he remained in person, on a height covered with thick woods; and had drawn up his cavalry and continental infantry about one hundred yards in their rear. On being attacked by Webster, the riflemen broke; and Washington, finding it impossible to rally them, rejoined his cavalry.

The British continuing to advance, and it being well understood that the militia could not stand the bayonet, General Stevens, who had received a ball in his right thigh, ordered his brigade to retreat. Lawson's brigade having given way a short time before, the second line was entirely routed; and the enemy advanced boldly on the third.

The several divisions of the British army had been separated from each other by extending themselves to the right and left in order to encounter the distinct corps which threatened their flanks; and by advancing in regiments at different times, as the different parts of the second line had given way. The thickness of the wood increased the difficulty of restoring order. They pressed forward with great eagerness, but with a considerable degree of irregularity.

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[1] Letter of Lord Cornwallis.—*Stedman*. [2] *Ibid.*

Greene, in this state of the action, entertained the most sanguine hopes of a complete victory. His continental troops were fresh, in perfect order, and upon the point of engaging an enemy, broken into distinct parts, and probably supposing the severity of the action to be over. This fair prospect was blasted by the misconduct of a single corps. The second regiment of Maryland was posted at some distance from the first, in open ground; its left forming almost a right angle with the line, so as to present a front to any corps which might attack on that flank. The British in advancing, inclined to the right; and the second battalion of guards entered the open ground immediately after the retreat of Stevens, and rushed on the second regiment of Maryland while the first was engaged with Webster. Without waiting to receive the charge, that regiment broke in confusion. By pursuing them, the guards were thrown into the rear of the first regiment, from which they were concealed by the unevenness of the ground, and by a skirt of wood.

Greene was himself on the left, and witnessed the misfortune without being able to remedy it. His militia being entirely routed, the flight of one-fourth of his continental troops would most probably decide the fate of the day. Unwilling to risk his remaining three regiments, only one of which could be safely relied on, without a man to cover their retreat should the event prove unfortunate, he ordered Colonel Greene of Virginia to withdraw his regiment from the line, and to take a position in the rear, for the purpose of affording a rallying point, and of covering the retreat of the two regiments which still continued in the field.

The Guards were soon called from the pursuit of the second Maryland regiment, and led by Lieutenant Colonel Stuart against the first. About this time Webster, finding himself overpowered by the first Maryland regiment, then commanded by Colonel Gunby, and by Kirkwood's company and the remaining regiment of Virginia, with whom he was engaged at the same time, had in a great measure withdrawn from the action, and retired across a ravine into an adjoining wood. This critical respite enabled Gunby to provide for the danger in his rear. Facing about, he met the Guards, and a very animated fire took place on both sides, during which the Americans continued to advance.

In this critical moment, Lieutenant Colonel Washington, who was drawn to this part of the field by the vivacity of the fire, made a furious charge upon the Guards and broke their ranks. At this juncture, Gunby's horse was killed under him, and the command devolved on Lieutenant Colonel Howard. The regiment advanced with such rapidity that Gunby could not overtake it, and was within thirty yards of the Guards when they were charged by the cavalry. Almost at the same instant the Maryland infantry rushed upon them with the bayonet, and following the horse through them, were masters of the whole battalion. In passing through it, Captain Smith of the infantry killed its commanding officer.

After passing through the Guards into the open ground where the second regiment had been originally posted, Howard perceived several British columns, with some pieces of artillery. Believing his regiment to be the sole infantry remaining in the field, he retreated in good order, and brought off some prisoners. The cavalry also retreated.[1]

About the same time the remaining Virginia regiment commanded by Colonel Hawes, and Kirkwood's infantry, who were still engaged with Webster, were directed by General Greene to retreat. The artillery was unavoidably abandoned; the horses which drew the pieces being killed, and the woods too thick to admit of their being dragged elsewhere than along the great road. The retreat was made in good order, and Greene, in person, brought up the rear.

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[1] After passing through the Guards into the cleared ground, Washington, who always led the van, perceived an officer surrounded by several persons who appeared to be aids-de-camp. Believing this to be Lord Cornwallis, he rushed forward in the hope of making him a prisoner, but was arrested by an accident. His cap fell from his head, and, as he leaped to the ground to recover it, the officer leading the column was shot through the body, and rendered incapable of managing his horse. The animal wheeled round with his rider, and galloped off the field. He was followed by all the cavalry, who supposed that this movement had been directed.

Though the action was over on the right and centre, Campbell's riflemen still maintained their ground on the extreme of the American left, against General Leslie with the regiment of Bose and the first battalion of Guards.

After the Guards had routed the brigade commanded by Lawson, they were attacked on their right flank by the infantry of Lee's legion and by Campbell's riflemen, and were driven behind the regiment of Bose, which having moved with less impetuosity, was advancing in compact order.

This regiment sustained the American fire until Lieutenant Colonel Norton was able to rally the guards and to bring them back to the charge; after which the action was maintained with great obstinacy on both sides until the battle was decided on the right. Lieutenant Colonel Tarlton was then ordered to the support of Leslie. The legion infantry had retreated, and only a few resolute marksmen remained in the rear of Campbell who continued firing from tree to tree. Being unable to resist a charge of cavalry, they were quickly driven from the field.

Two regiments of infantry and a detachment of cavalry pursued the right wing and centre of the Americans for a short distance, but were soon ordered to return. On examining his situation, Lord Cornwallis found himself too much weakened, and his troops too much fatigued by the action, to hazard its renewal, or to continue the pursuit. General Greene halted about three miles from the field of battle, behind Rudy fork creek, for the purpose of collecting his stragglers; after which he retired about twelve miles, to the iron works on Troublesome creek, the place appointed for the rendezvous of his army in the event of its being defeated.

The returns made immediately after the action, exhibited a loss in killed, wounded and missing in the continental troops, of fourteen commissioned officers, and three hundred and twelve non-commissioned officers and privates. Major Anderson, a valuable officer of Maryland, was killed; and General Huger, who commanded the continental troops of Virginia, was wounded.

The same return states the loss of the militia at four captains and seventeen privates killed; and, in addition to General Stevens, one major, three captains, eight subalterns, and sixty privates, were wounded. A great proportion of this part of the army was missing; but it seems to have been expected that they would either rejoin their corps, or be found at their homes.

The victory at Guilford was dearly purchased. Official accounts state the loss of the British army at five hundred and thirty-two men, among whom were several officers of high rank and distinguished merit. Lieutenant Colonel Stuart of the guards was killed, and Lieutenant Colonel Webster, who was ranked by his enemies among the best officers in the British service, was mortally wounded. This loss, when compared with the numbers brought by Lord Cornwallis into the field, was very considerable. The Americans did not compute his troops at more than two thousand rank and file, but his own accounts state them at only fourteen hundred and forty-five.

No battle in the course of the war reflects more honour on the courage of the British troops, than that of Guilford. On no other occasion have they fought with such inferiority of numbers, or disadvantage of ground. Estimating his first line at nothing, General Greene's army consisted of three thousand two hundred men, posted on ground chosen by himself; and his disposition was skilfully made.

The American general, expecting to be again attacked, prepared for another engagement. But the situation of Lord Cornwallis had become too desperate to hazard a second battle, or to maintain his position. He found himself under the necessity of retreating to a place of greater security, where provisions might be obtained.

When the expedition into North Carolina was originally meditated, Major Craig, at the head of a small military and naval force, took possession of Wilmington, a town near the mouth of Cape Fear, and extended his authority several miles up the river. Lord Cornwallis now looked to a communication with this post for aids which had become indispensable to the farther operations of the campaign.

On the third day after the battle, he broke up his encampment, and proceeded by slow and easy marches towards Cross creek.

March 18. General Greene, on hearing that the British army was retreating, resolved to follow it. The difficulty of subsisting the troops in an exhausted and hostile country; and the necessity of waiting for a supply of ammunition, impeded the march of his army so much that he did not reach Ramsay's mills until the 28th of March.

At this place Lord Cornwallis had halted, and here General Greene expected to overtake and attack him. But, on the approach of the American army, his lordship resumed his march to Cross creek, and afterwards to Wilmington, where he arrived on the 7th of April.

General Greene gave over the pursuit at Ramsay's mills. So excessive had been the sufferings of his army from the want of provisions, that many of the men fainted on the march, and it had become absolutely necessary to allow them some repose and refreshment. The expiration of the time for which the Virginia militia had been called into service, furnished an additional motive for suspending the pursuit.

At this place, the bold and happy resolution was taken to carry the war into South Carolina.

The motives which induced the adoption of this measure were stated by himself in a letter communicating his determination to the Commander-in-chief. It would compel Lord Cornwallis to follow him, and thus liberate North Carolina, or to sacrifice all his posts in the upper parts of South Carolina and Georgia.

The Southern army amounted to about seventeen hundred effectives. That of Lord Cornwallis is understood to have been still less numerous. So impotent were the means employed for the conquest and defence of states which were of immense extent and value.

This unexpected movement gave a new aspect to affairs, and produced some irresolution in the British general respecting his future operations. After weighing the probable advantages and disadvantages of following Greene into South Carolina, he decided against this retrograde movement and determined to advance into Virginia.

CHAPTER XXI

THE evacuation of Portsmouth by Leslie afforded Virginia but a short interval of repose. So early as the 9th of December, 1780, a letter from General Washington 1781. announced to the governor that a large embarkation, supposed to be destined for the south, was about taking place at New York. On the 30th, a fleet of transports under convoy, having on board between one and two thousand men, commanded by General Arnold, anchored in Hampton road. The troops were embarked the next day on board vessels adapted to the navigation, and proceeded up James' river under convoy of two small ships of war. On the fourth of January they reached Westover, which is distant about twenty-five miles from Richmond, the capital of Virginia.

On receiving intelligence that a fleet had entered the capes, General Nelson was employed in raising the militia of the lower country; and on the 2d of January orders were issued to call out those above the metropolis and in its neighbourhood.

On reaching Westover, Arnold landed with the greater part of his army, and commenced his march towards Richmond. The few continental troops at Petersburg were ordered to the capital; and between one and two hundred militia, who had been collected from the town and its immediate vicinity, were directed to harass the advancing enemy. This party was too feeble for its object; and, the day after Jan. 5. landing at Westover, Arnold entered Richmond, where he halted with about five hundred men. The residue, amounting to about four hundred, including thirty horse, proceeded under Lieutenant Colonel Simcoe to Westham, where they burnt a valuable foundry, boring mill, powder magazine, and other smaller buildings, with military stores to a considerable amount, and many valuable papers belonging to the government, which had been carried thither as to a place of safety.

This service being effected, Lieutenant Colonel Simcoe rejoined Arnold at Richmond; where the public stores, and a large quantity of rum and salt, the property of private individuals, were entirely destroyed.

Leaving Richmond the next day, the army returned to Westover[1] on the seventh; and, re-embarking on the morning of the tenth, proceeded down the river. It was followed by the Baron Steuben, who commanded in Virginia; and, near Hoods, Colonel Clarke drew a party of them into an ambuscade, and gave them one fire with some effect; but, on its being partially returned, the Americans broke and fled in the utmost confusion.[2]

Arnold proceeded slowly down the river; and on the twentieth reached Portsmouth, where he manifested the intention of establishing a permanent post.

The loss of the British in this expedition, was stated in the gazette of New York, at seven killed, including one subaltern, and twenty-three wounded, among whom was one captain. This small loss was sustained almost entirely in the ambuscade near Hoods.

In the north, the year commenced with an event, which, for a time, threatened the American cause with total ruin.

The accumulated sufferings and privations of the army constitute a large and interesting part of the history of that war which gave independence to the United States. Winter, without much lessening their toils, added to those sufferings. The soldiers were perpetually on the point of starving, were often entirely without food; were exposed without proper clothing to the rigours of the season, and had now served almost twelve months without pay.

This state of things had been of such long continuance that scarcely the hope of a change could be indulged. It produced, unavoidably, some relaxation of discipline; and the murmurs, occasionally escaping the officers, sometimes heard by the soldiers, were not without their influence.

In addition to the general causes of dissatisfaction, the Pennsylvania line complained of a grievance almost peculiar to itself.

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[1] While the army lay at Westover, Lieutenant Colonel Simcoe, at the head of less than fifty horse, attacked and dispersed a body of militia at Charles City court house, with the loss of only one man killed, and three wounded.

[2] The author witnessed this skirmish.

When congress directed enlistments to be made for three years, or during the war, the recruiting officers of Pennsylvania, in some instances, instead of engaging their men, definitively, for the one period or the other, engaged them generally for three years, or the war. This ambiguity in the terms of enlistment produced its natural effect. The soldier claimed his discharge at the expiration of three years, and the officer insisted on retaining him in service during the war. The soldier submitted with the more reluctance to the supposed imposition, as he constantly witnessed the immense bounties given to those who were not bound by a former enlistment.

The discontents which these various causes had been long fomenting, broke out on the night of the 1st of January, in an open and almost universal revolt of the line.

On a signal given, the great body of the non-commissioned officers and privates paraded under arms, avowing the determination to march to the seat of congress, and either obtain redress of their complicated grievances, or serve no longer. In the attempt to suppress the mutiny, six or seven of the mutineers were wounded on the one side; and on the other, Captain Billing was killed, and several other officers were dangerously wounded. The authority of General Wayne availed nothing. On cocking his pistol, and threatening some of the most turbulent, the bayonet was presented to his bosom; and he perceived that strong measures would produce his own destruction, and perhaps the massacre of every officer in camp. A few regiments who did not at first join the mutineers, were paraded by their officers; but, had they even been willing to proceed to extremities, they were not strong enough to restore order. Infected quickly with the general contagion, or intimidated by the threats of the mutineers, they joined their comrades; and the whole body, consisting of about thirteen hundred men, with six field pieces, marched, under the command of their serjeants, towards Princeton.

The next day, General Wayne, accompanied by Colonels Butler and Stewart, officers possessing, in a high degree, the affections of the soldiery, followed them, in the hope of bringing them back to their duty, or at least of dividing them. They were overtaken near Middlebrook, and invited by a written message from General Wayne, to appoint one man from each regiment to state the grievances of which they complained.

In consequence of this invitation, a serjeant from each regiment met the officers at their quarters, and some verbal communications were made, from the complexion of which sanguine hopes were entertained that the affair might be terminated without farther hazard, or much injury to the service.

On the following day, the line of march was resumed, and the soldiers proceeded to Princeton. Jan. 3. The propositions of the general and field officers were reported to them, and a committee of serjeants, to whom they were referred, stated their claims. These were:

1st. A discharge for all those who had served three years under their original engagements, whatever those engagements might have been, and who had not taken the increased bounty, and re-enlisted for the war.

2nd. An immediate payment of all their arrears of pay and clothing, as well to those who should be discharged, as to those who should continue in service.

3rd. The residue of their bounty, and future real pay to those who should continue in the army.

General Wayne being unwilling to discharge all those who had not re-enlisted for the war, the subject was referred to the civil power.

On receiving intelligence of the mutiny, congress appointed a committee to confer with the executive of Pennsylvania respecting it. The result of this conference was that both the committee, and the governor with some members of the executive council, left Philadelphia for the purpose of endeavouring to accommodate this dangerous commotion.

At his head quarters, at New Windsor, on the North River, General Washington received intelligence of this alarming mutiny. Accustomed as he had been to contemplate hazardous and difficult situations, it was not easy, under existing circumstances, to resolve instantly on the course it was most prudent to pursue. His first impression—to repair to the camp of the mutineers—soon gave place to opinions which were formed on more mature reflection.

It was almost certain that the business was already in the hands of the civil government, with whose arrangements it might be improper for him to interfere. Independent of this consideration, other motives of irresistible influence detained him on the North River.

The most important among those subjects of complaint which were alleged as the causes of the mutiny, were true in fact, were common to the whole army, and were of a nature to disseminate too generally those seeds of disquiet, which had attained their full growth and maturity in the Pennsylvania line. Strong symptoms of discontent had already been manifested; and it was, therefore, impossible to say with confidence, how far the same temper existed among the other troops; or how far the contagion of example had or would spread.

The danger arising from this state of things was much increased by the circumstance that the river was perfectly open, and afforded Sir Henry Clinton an easy and rapid transportation for his army to West Point, should the situation of its garrison invite an enterprise against that post.

It was an additional consideration of great weight, that it might have a most pernicious influence on the discipline of the whole army, should the authority of the Commander-in-chief be disregarded. He ought not to place himself in a situation where his orders might be disobeyed with impunity; an event much to be apprehended, should he repair to the camp of the mutineers, unattended by a military force adequate to the occasion.

Such a force could not be immediately commanded. His effectives in the Highlands amounted only to thirteen hundred and seventy-six men; and that whole division of the army, dispersed at various and distant stations, excluding the sick and those on furlough, did not exceed four thousand. Assuming therefore the fidelity of the troops, it was impracticable to march immediately with a force sufficient to reduce the Pennsylvania line, without leaving the Highlands undefended. Nor was it unworthy of consideration that, in the actual situation of the mutineers, the probability of their being attacked by such a force might drive them to the enemy, or disperse them, events, either of which would deprive the army of a valuable part of its strength.

It was therefore thought adviseable to leave the negotiation with the civil power, and to prepare for those measures which ought to be adopted in the event of its failure. The disposition of the troops on the North River was sounded, and found to be favourable; after which, a detachment of eleven hundred men was ordered to be in readiness to move on a moment's warning. On the first notice of the mutiny, the militia of Jersey took the field under General Dickinson, and measures were taken to call out those of New York should the occasion require it.

Jan. 4.

To avail himself of an event appearing so auspicious to the royal cause, Sir Henry Clinton ordered a large body of troops to be in readiness to move on the shortest notice; and despatched three emissaries with tempting offers to the revolters; and instructions to invite them, while the negotiation should be depending, to take a position behind the South River, where they should be effectually covered by detachments from New York. While these measures were taking, Sir Henry kept his eye on West Point, and held himself in readiness to strike at that place, should any movement on the part of General Washington open to him a prospect of success.[1]

His emissaries were immediately seized by the revolters, and their proposals communicated to General Wayne, with assurances of the utter detestation in which every idea of going over to the common enemy was held.

This favourable symptom, however, was accompanied by suspicious circumstances. They retained the British emissaries in their own possession; and could not be induced to cross the Delaware, or to march from Princeton. They would not permit any of their former officers, other than those already mentioned, to enter their camp; and General St. Clair, the Marquis de Lafayette, and Lieutenant Colonel Laurens, were ordered to leave Princeton.

Such was the state of things when the committee of congress, and President Read with a part of his executive council, arrived in the neighbourhood of the revolters. The former having delegated their power to the latter, a conference was held with the serjeants who now commanded, after which proposals were made and distributed among the troops for consideration.

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[1] Letter of Sir Henry Clinton.

In these proposals the government offered,

1st. To discharge all those who had enlisted indefinitely for three years or during the war, the fact to be examined into by three commissioners, to be appointed by the executive; and to be ascertained, when the original enlistment could not be produced, by the oath of the soldier.

2dly. To give immediate certificates for the depreciation on their pay, and to settle the arrearages as soon as circumstances would admit.

3dly. To furnish them immediately with certain specified articles of clothing which were most wanted.

On receiving these propositions, the troops agreed to march to Trenton. At that place the terms were accepted, with the addition that three commissioners should also be deputed by the line, who, conjointly with those of the executive should constitute the board authorized to determine on the claims of the soldiers to be discharged; and thereupon the British emissaries were surrendered, who were tried, condemned, and executed as spies.

Until the investigation should be made, and discharges given to those who should be found entitled to them, the serjeants retained their command. In consequence of the irksomeness of this state of things, the business was pressed with so much precipitation, that before the enlistments themselves could be brought from the huts, almost the whole of the artillery, and of the five first regiments of infantry, were liberated on the testimony of their own oaths. The enlistments being then produced, it was found that not many of the remaining regiments had engaged on the terms which, under the compact, would entitle them to leave the service; and that, of those actually dismissed, far the greater number had been enlisted absolutely for the war. The discharges given, however, were not cancelled; and the few who were to remain in service received furloughs for forty days.

Thus ended, in a temporary dissolution of the whole line of Pennsylvania, a mutiny, which a voluntary performance of much less than was extorted, would have prevented; and which, in the actual condition of the army, was of a nature and extent to inspire the most serious alarm.

The dangerous policy of yielding even to the just demands of soldiers made with arms in their hands, was soon illustrated. The success of the Pennsylvania line inspired that of Jersey, many of whom were also foreigners, with the hope of obtaining similar advantages. On the night of the 20th, a part of the Jersey brigade, which had been stationed at Pompton, rose in arms; and, making precisely the same claims which had been yielded to the Pennsylvanians, marched to Chatham, where a part of the same brigade was cantoned, in the hope of exciting them also to join in the revolt.

General Washington, who had been extremely chagrined at the issue of the mutiny in the Pennsylvania line, and who was now assured of the confidence to be placed in the fidelity of the eastern troops, who were composed of natives, determined, by strong measures, to stop the farther progress of a spirit which threatened the destruction of the army, and ordered a detachment to march against the mutineers, and to bring them to unconditional submission. General Howe, who commanded this detachment, was instructed to make no terms with the insurgents while in a state of resistance; and, as soon as they should surrender, to seize a few of the most active leaders, and to execute them on the spot. These orders were promptly obeyed, and the Jersey mutineers returned to their duty.

In the hope of being more successful with the revolters of Jersey than he had been with those of Pennsylvania, Sir Henry Clinton offered them the same terms which had been proposed to the mutineers at Princeton; and General Robertson, at the head of three thousand men, was detached to Staten Island with the avowed purpose of crossing over into Jersey, and covering any movement which they might make towards New York. The emissary, being in the American interest, delivered his papers to the officer commanding at the first station to which he came. Other papers were dispersed among the mutineers; but the mutiny was crushed too suddenly to allow time for the operation of these propositions.

The vigorous measures taken in this instance were happily followed by such an attention on the part of the states, to the actual situation of the army, as checked the progress of discontent. Influenced by the representations of the Commander-in-chief, they raised three months pay in specie, which they forwarded to the soldiers, who received it with joy, considering it as evidence that their fellow citizens were not entirely unmindful of their sufferings.

Although the army was thus reduced to such extreme distress, the discontents of the people were daily multiplied by the contributions which they were required to make, and by the irritating manner in which those contributions were drawn from them. Every article for public use was obtained by impressment; and the taxes were either unpaid, or collected by coercive means. Strong remonstrances were made against this system, and the dissatisfaction which pervaded the mass of the community, was scarcely less dangerous than that which had been manifested by the army.

To the judicious patriots throughout America, the necessity of giving greater powers to the federal government became every day more apparent; but the efforts of enlightened individuals were too feeble to correct that fatal disposition of power which had been made by enthusiasm uninstructed by experience.

To relieve the United States from their complicated embarrassments, a foreign loan seemed an expedient of indispensable necessity, and from France they hoped to obtain it. Congress selected Lieutenant Colonel Laurens, a gentleman whose situation in the family of the Commander-in-chief had enabled him to take a comprehensive view of the military capacities and weaknesses of his country, for this interesting service; and instructed him also to urge the advantage of maintaining a naval superiority in the American seas. Before his departure, he passed some days at head quarters, and received from General Washington in the form of a letter, the result of his reflections on the existing state of things.

In this paper he detailed the pecuniary embarrassments of the government, and represented, with great earnestness, the inability of the nation to furnish a revenue adequate to the support of the war. He dwelt on the discontents which the system of impressment had excited among the people, and expressed his fears that the evils felt in the prosecution of the war, might weaken the sentiments which began it.

From this state of things, he deduced the vital importance of an immediate and ample supply of money, which might be the foundation for substantial arrangements of finance, for reviving public credit, and giving vigour to future operations; as well as of a decided effort of the allied arms on the continent to effect the great objects of the alliance, in the ensuing campaign.

Next to a supply of money, he considered a naval superiority in the American seas, as an object of the deepest interest.

To the United States, it would be of decisive importance, and France also might derive great advantages from transferring the maritime war to the coast of her ally.

The future ability of the United States to repay any loan which might now be obtained was displayed; and he concluded with assurances that there was still a fund of inclination and resource in the country, equal to great and continued exertions, provided the means were afforded of stopping the progress of disgust, by changing the present system, and adopting another more consonant with the spirit of the nation, and more capable of infusing activity and energy into public measures; of which a powerful succour in money must be the basis. "The people were discontented, but it was with the feeble and oppressive mode of conducting the war, not with the war itself."

With reason did the Commander-in-chief thus urge on the cabinet of Versailles, the policy of advancing a sum of money to the United States which might be adequate to the exigency. Deep was the gloom with which their political horizon was overcast. The British, in possession of South Carolina, and of Georgia, had overrun the greater part of North Carolina also; and it was with equal hazard and address that Greene maintained himself in the northern frontier of that state.

A second detachment from New York was making a deep impression on Virginia, where the resistance had been neither so prompt nor so vigorous[1] as the strength of that state and the unanimity of its citizens had given reason to expect.

The perplexities and difficulties in which the affairs of America were involved, were estimated by the British government even above their real value. Intercepted letters of this date from the minister, expressed the most sanguine hopes that the great superiority of force at the disposal of Sir Henry Clinton, would compel Washington with his feeble army to take refuge on the eastern side of the Hudson.

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[1] A slave population must be unfavourable to great and sudden exertions by militia.

Even congress relaxed for an instant from its habitual firmness; and, receding from the decisive manner in which that body had insisted on the territorial and maritime rights of the nation, directed the American minister at Madrid to relinquish, if it should be absolutely necessary, the claims of the United States to navigate the Mississippi below the thirty-first degree of north latitude, and to a free port on the banks of that river within the Spanish territory. It is remarkable that only Massachusetts, Connecticut, and North Carolina, dissented from this resolution; New York was divided.[1] On a subsequent day, the subject was again brought forward, and a proposition was made for still farther concessions to Spain; but this proposition was negatived by all the states.[2]

Happily for the United States, Mr. Jay, their minister at the court of Madrid, required as the price of the concessions he was instructed to make, that the treaty he was labouring to negotiate should be immediately concluded.

The establishment of a revenue subject to the exclusive control and direction of the continental government, was connected inseparably with the restoration of credit. The efforts therefore to negotiate a foreign loan were accompanied by resolutions requesting the respective states to place a fund under the control of congress, which should be both permanent and productive. A resolution was passed, recommending to the respective states to vest a power in congress to levy for the use of the United States a duty of five *per centum advalorem* on all goods imported into any of them; and also on all prizes condemned in any of the American courts of admiralty.

This fund was to be appropriated to the payment of both the principal and interest of all debts contracted in the prosecution of the war; and was to continue until those debts should be completely discharged.

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[1] Secret journals of Congress, v. 2, pp. 393, 396, 407. This measure was moved by the delegation from Virginia, in consequence of instructions of 2d Jan. 1781, Sec. 10, H. at large, 538.

[2] Secret journals of Congress, v. 2, p. 468.

Congress, at that time, contained several members who perceived the advantages which would result from bestowing on the government of the nation the full power of regulating commerce, and, consequently, of increasing the import as circumstances might render adviseable; but state influence predominated, and they were overruled by great majorities. Even the inadequate plan which they did recommend was never adopted. Notwithstanding the greatness of the exigency, and the pressure of the national wants, never, during the existence of the confederation, did all the states unite in assenting to this recommendation; so unwilling are men possessed of power, to place it in the hands of others.

About the same time a reform was introduced into the administration, the necessity of which had been long perceived. From a misplaced prejudice against institutions sanctioned by experience, all the great executive duties had been devolved either on committees of congress, or on boards consisting of several members. This unwieldy and expensive system had maintained itself against all the efforts of reason and public utility. But the scantiness of the national means at length prevailed over prejudice, and the several committees and boards yielded to a secretary for foreign affairs, a superintendent of finance, a secretary of war, and a secretary of marine. But so miserably defective was the organization of congress, as an executive body, that the year had far advanced before this measure, the utility of which all acknowledged, could be carried into complete operation by making all the appointments.

About this time the articles of confederation were ratified. Much difficulty was encountered in obtaining the adoption of this instrument. The numerous objections made by the states yielded successively to the opinion that a federal compact would be of vast importance in the prosecution of the war. One impediment it was found peculiarly difficult to remove. Within the chartered limits of several states, were immense tracts of vacant territory, which, it was supposed, would constitute a large fund of future wealth; and the states not possessing that advantage insisted on considering this territory as a joint acquisition. At length this difficulty also was surmounted; and, in February, 1781, to the great joy of America, this interesting compact was rendered complete.[1] Like many other human in-

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[1] The secret journals of congress, published under the resolutions of March 27th, 1818, and April 21st, 1820, contain "A History of the Confederation." The course of public opinion on a most important point—the nature of the connexion which ought to be maintained between these United States—may be in some degree perceived in the progress of this instrument, and may not be entirely uninteresting to the American reader.

So early as July, 1775, Doctor Franklin submitted "Articles of Confederation and perpetual union" to the consideration of congress, which were to continue in force until a reconciliation with Great Britain should take place on the terms demanded by the colonies. Into this confederation, not only all the British colonies on the continent, but Ireland and the West India islands were to be admitted.

Congress was to consist of members chosen by each colony in proportion to its numbers, and was to sit in each successively. Its powers were to embrace the external relations of the country, the settling of all disputes between the colonies, the planting of new colonies; and were to extend to ordinances on such general subjects as, though necessary to the general welfare, particular assemblies can not be competent to, viz. "Those that may relate to our general commerce, or general currency; the establishment of ports; and the regulation of our common forces."

The executive was to consist of a council of twelve, selected by congress from its own body, one-third of whom were to be changed annually.

Amendments were to be proposed by congress; and, when approved by a majority of the colonial assemblies, were to become a part of the constitution.

In June, 1776, a committee was appointed to prepare and digest the form of a confederation to be entered into between the United Colonies, which brought in a draft (in the hand writing of Mr. John Dickinson) on the 12th of the succeeding month.

This report was under debate until the 14th of November, 1777, on which day congress agreed on the articles afterwards adopted by the states.

In the scheme supposed to be prepared by Mr. Dickinson, the confederation is considered as an alliance of sovereign states, who meet as equals by their deputies assembled to deliberate on their common concerns, each sovereign having a voice. This principle was retained; but several modifications in the language and principle of the original scheme were made, which indicate a watchful and growing jealousy of the powers of congress.

In each, an article is introduced reserving the rights of the states. That which is found in the report, "reserves to each state the sole and exclusive regulation and government of its internal police, in all matters that *shall not interfere with the articles of this confederation.*"

This article was so modified as to declare that "each state retains its sovereignty," "and every power, jurisdiction and right, which is not by this confederation *expressly* delegated to the United States in congress assembled."

This denial of all incidental powers had vast influence on the affairs of the United States. It defeated, in many instances, the granted powers, by rendering their exercise impracticable.

The report permits the states to impose duties on imports and exports; provided they "do not interfere with any stipulations in treaties hereafter entered into by the United States."

The confederation confines this restriction on the power of the state to such duties as interfere with the stipulations in treaties entered into "in pursuance of any treaties already proposed by congress to the courts of France and Spain."

Each plan assigns to the state in which troops shall be raised for the common defence, the power of appointing the field and inferior officers. The confederation adds the power of filling up such vacancies as may occur.

The report inhibits a state from endeavouring by force to obtain compensation for stitutions, it was productive, neither in war nor in peace, of all the benefits which its sanguine advocates had expected. Had

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advances made or injuries suffered during the war, which shall not be allowed by congress.

The confederation omits this inhibition.

The report gives to congress the power of making treaties.

The confederation adds a proviso, "that no treaty of commerce shall be made whereby the legislative power of the respective states shall be restrained from imposing such imports and duties on foreigners as their own people are subjected to, or from prohibiting the exportation or importation of any species of goods or commodities whatever."

The report authorizes congress to appoint "courts for the trial of all crimes, frauds, and piracies committed on the high seas, or on any navigable river not within a county or parish."

The confederation limits the jurisdiction to "piracies and felonies committed on the high seas."

Both empower congress to appoint courts for the trial of appeals in cases of capture; but the confederation provides that no member of congress shall be appointed a judge of any such court.

Both empower congress to settle differences between the states. The confederation prescribes minutely the manner in which this power shall be exercised.

Both empower congress "to regulate the trade and manage all affairs with the Indians." The confederation provides "that the legislative right of any state within its own limits be not infringed or violated."

The report gives the power of "establishing and regulating post offices throughout all the United Colonies (states) *on the lines of communication* from one colony (state) to another."

The confederation varies the phraseology and adds, "and exacting such postage on the papers passing through the same as may be requisite to defray the expenses of the said office."

The report places many important portions of the executive power in a council of state, to consist of one delegate from each state to be named annually by the delegates of that state.

The confederation empowers congress to appoint a committee to sit in the recess of congress, to be denominated "a committee of the states," and to consist of one delegate from each state, to exercise such powers as congress might from time to time vest them with.

A few of the states agreed to ratify the confederation unconditionally. By many, amendments were proposed which were steadily rejected by congress. It was obvious that the delays would be almost interminable should congress relax this determination, because every change would make it necessary again to submit the instrument as amended to the several states. It is remarkable that Jersey alone proposed an enlargement of the powers of congress. That state was desirous of investing the representatives of the state with the power of regulating commerce.

The states possessing no vacant lands, or an inconsiderable quantity within their chartered limits, pressed earnestly and perseveringly their claim to participate in the advantages of territory, which was, they said, acquired by the united arms of the whole; and Maryland refused, on this account, to accede to the confederation. At length, several of the states empowered their members in congress to ratify that instrument as forming a union between the twelve states who had assented to it. Maryland, alarmed at the prospect of being excluded from the union, gave her reluctant consent to the confederation, accompanied by a protest, in which she still asserted her claim to her interest in the vacant territory which should be acknowledged at the treaty of peace, to be within the United States.

It required the repeated lessons of a severe and instructive experience to persuade the American people that their greatness, their prosperity, their happiness, and even their safety, imperiously demanded the substitution of a government for their favourite league.

peace been made before any agreement for a permanent union was formed, it is far from being improbable that the different parts might have fallen asunder, and a dismemberment have taken place. If the confederation really preserved the idea of union until the good sense of the nation adopted a more efficient system, this service alone entitles that instrument to the respectful recollection of the American people, and its framers to their gratitude.

Such was the defensive strength of the positions taken by the adverse armies on the Hudson, and such their relative force, that no decisive blow could be given by either in that quarter of the continent. The anxious attentions of General Washington, therefore, were unremittingly directed to the south. One of those incidents which fortune occasionally produces, on the seizing or neglect of which the great military events frequently depend, presented, sooner than was expected, an opportunity which he deemed capable of being improved to the destruction of the British army in Virginia.

The French fleet, from its arrival on the American coast, had been blocked up in the harbor of Newport; and the land forces of that nation had been reduced to a state of inactivity by the necessity of defending their ships. Late in January, a detachment from the British fleet was encountered on the east end of Long Island by a furious storm, in which such damage was sustained as to destroy for a time the naval superiority which Arbuthnot had uniformly preserved.

To turn this temporary superiority to advantage, Monsieur Destouches resolved to detach a ship of the line, with two frigates, to the Chesapeake; a force which the delegation from Virginia had assured him would be sufficient for the purpose.

On receiving certain accounts of the loss sustained in the storm, General Washington conceived the design of improving that circumstance by immediate and powerful operations against Arnold. Confident that the critical moment must be seized, or the enterprise would fail, he ordered a detachment of twelve hundred men, under the command of the Marquis de Lafayette, to the head of the Chesapeake; there to embark for that part of Virginia which was to become the theatre of action, under convoy of a French frigate, for which he applied to the admiral. He immediately communicated this measure to the Count De Rochambeau, and to Monsieur Destouches, to whom he also stated his conviction that no serious advantage could be expected from a few ships, unaided by land troops. "There were," he said, "a variety of positions to be taken by Arnold, one of which was Portsmouth, his present station, where his ships might be so protected by his batteries on the shore as to defy a mere naval attack; and where he would certainly be able to maintain himself until the losses sustained in the late storm should be repaired, and the superiority at sea recovered, when he would unquestionably be relieved."

To insure the success of the expedition, he recommended that the whole fleet should be employed on it, and that a detachment of one thousand men should be embarked for the same service.

These representations did not prevail. The original plan had already been put in execution. On the 9th of February, a sixty-four gun ship with two frigates, under Monsieur De Tilley, had sailed for the Chesapeake; and, as some of the British ships had been repaired, the French admiral did not think it prudent to put to sea with the residue of his fleet.

As had been foreseen by General Washington, De Tilley found Arnold in a situation not to be assailed with any prospect of success. After showing himself therefore in the bay, and making an ineffectual attempt to enter Elizabeth river, he returned to Newport. At the capes, he fell in with the Romulus, a fifty-gun ship, coming from Charleston to the Chesapeake, which he captured.

Both the Count De Rochambeau, and the Chevalier Destouches, being well disposed to execute the plans suggested by General Washington, they determined, on the return of Monsieur De Tilley, to make a second expedition to the Chesapeake with the whole fleet, and eleven hundred men. General Washington, therefore, hastened to Newport, that in a personal conference with them, he might facilitate the execution of an enterprise from which he still entertained sanguine hopes.

Early on the 6th of March he reached Newport, and went instantly on board the Admiral, where he was met by the

Count De Rochambeau. It was determined that a detachment from the army, then in perfect readiness, should be embarked under the Count De Viominil; and that the fleet should put to sea as soon as possible. The wind was favourable to the French, and adverse to the British. Yet the fleet did not sail until the evening of the eighth. It appears from a letter of Monsieur Destouches, that this delay was in some measure attributable to a disaster which befel one of his frigates in getting out of port; and there is reason to suppose that it may be ascribed to a want of supplies. Whatever may have been the cause, Arnold is most probably indebted to it for his escape from the fate which his treason merited.

Two days after Destouches had sailed, he was followed by Arbuthnot, who overtook him off the capes of Virginia. A partial engagement ensued which continued about an hour, when the fleets were separated.

The French admiral called a council of war the next day, in which it was declared unadviseable to renew the action, and he returned to Newport.

March 26.

The arrival of two thousand men commanded by General Philips, gave the British a decided superiority in Virginia, and changed the destination of Lafayette, who had been ordered to join the southern army, but to whom the defence of that state was now committed. The troops under his command being taken chiefly from the eastern regiments, had imbibed strong prejudices against a southern climate; and desertions became so frequent as to threaten the dissolution of the corps.

This unpromising state of things was completely changed by a happy expedient adopted by Lafayette. Appealing to the generous principles of his soldiers, principles on which the feelings of his own bosom taught him to rely, he proclaimed in orders, that he was about to enter on an enterprise of great danger and difficulty, in which he persuaded himself his soldiers would not abandon him. If, however, any individual of the detachment was unwilling to accompany him, a permit to return should most assuredly be granted him.

This measure had the desired effect, and put an end to desertion.[1] To keep up the good dispositions of the moment, this ardent young nobleman, who was as unmindful of fortune as he was ambitious of fame, borrowed from the merchants of Baltimore, on his private credit, a sum of money sufficient to purchase shoes, linen, spirits, and other articles of immediate necessity for the detachment.[2]

Having made these preparations for the campaign, he marched with the utmost celerity to the defence of Virginia. That state was in great need of assistance. The enemy had penetrated deep into its bosom, and was committing those excesses on its inhabitants to which a country unable to repel invasion must always be exposed.

General Philips, on his arrival, took command of all the British troops in Virginia; and, after completing the fortification of Portsmouth, commenced offensive operations.

About two thousand five hundred men were embarked on board some small vessels, and landed at various places in the neighbourhood of Williamsburg. Different detachments spread themselves over the lower part of that neck of land which is made by York and James rivers; and, after destroying, without opposition, a ship yard belonging to the state, with some armed vessels and public stores, re-embarked and proceeded to City Point, where they landed in the afternoon of the 24th. The next day they marched against Petersburg, at which place, immense quantities of tobacco and other stores were deposited.

April.

Baron Steuben was not in a situation to check their progress. The levies of Virginia had marched to the aid of General Greene; and the whole number of militia, at that time in the field, did not much exceed two thousand men. Unwilling to abandon so important a place as Petersburg without the semblance of fighting, the baron posted about one thousand men a mile below the town with orders to skirmish with the enemy. The British troops, without being able to bring him to a close engagement, were two or three hours employed in driving him across the Appomattox, the bridge over which being taken up as soon as the militia had passed it, farther pursuit became impracticable.

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[1] The author was assured by General Lafayette that this was true. Such was the enthusiasm of the moment, that a lame serjeant hired a place in a cart to keep up with the army.

[2] It is not unworthy of notice, that the ladies of Baltimore charged themselves with the toil of immediately making up the summer clothing for the troops. Innumerable instances of their zeal in the common cause of their country were given in every state in the union.

This skirmish having terminated with scarcely any loss on either side, the baron retreated towards Richmond, and Philips took quiet possession of Petersburg; where he destroyed a considerable quantity of tobacco, and all the vessels lying in the river.

This service being accomplished, Arnold was detached through Osbornes to Warwick, between which place and Richmond, a respectable naval force, consisting of small armed vessels, had been collected with the intention of co-operating with the French fleet against Portsmouth; and a few militia were stationed on the northern bank of the river to assist in defending the flotilla.

The crews of the vessels, on receiving a fire from a few field pieces ordered by Arnold to the bank, scuttled them, escaped to the opposite shore, and dispersed with the militia. Philips marched with the residue of the army to Chesterfield court house, the place of rendezvous for the new levies of Virginia, where he destroyed the barracks with a few public stores; after which he joined Arnold in the neighbourhood of Warwick, and marched without interruption to Manchester, a small town on the southern bank of James river, immediately opposite to Richmond; where, as was the general practice, the warehouses were set on fire, and all the tobacco consumed.

April 30.

On the preceding evening, the Marquis de Lafayette, who had made a forced march from Baltimore, arrived with his detachment at Richmond; and that place, in which a great proportion of the military stores of the state were then collected, was saved, for the time, from a visit which was certainly designed.

The regular troops composing this detachment were joined by about two thousand militia, and sixty dragoons. Not thinking it adviseable to attempt the passage of the river in the presence of so respectable an army, General Philips retired to Bermuda Hundred, a point of land in the confluence of the James and Appomattox, at which place he re-em-

May 5.

barked his troops, and fell down the river to Hog Island.

The Marquis fixed his head quarters on the north of Chiccahominy, about eighteen miles from Richmond; where he remained until a letter from Lord Cornwallis called Philips again up James river.

When that nobleman determined on marching from Wilmington into Virginia, he signified his wish that the British troops in that state, should take their station at Petersburg.

On receiving this letter, Philips proceeded to comply with May 7. the request it contained. As soon as the fleet moved up the river, Lafayette returned to the defence of Richmond. Having, on his arrival, received intelligence that Lord Cornwallis was marching northward, and finding Philips landed at Brandon on the south side of the river, he was persuaded that a junction of the two armies must be intended, and May 13. hastened to take possession of Petersburg[1] before Philips could reach that place. In this however he was anticipated by the British general; upon which he recrossed James river, and, encamping a few miles below Richmond, used his utmost exertions to remove the military stores in that town to a place of greater security.

In this position his army was permitted to repose itself but a few days. Lord Cornwallis, after passing through North Carolina and the southern parts of Virginia without encountering much opposition, and effecting a junction with Arnold, who had succeeded by the death of Philips to the command of the army in Virginia,[2] found himself at the head of a force which nothing in that state could resist; and determined on a vigorous plan of offensive operations. His immediate object was to bring the Marquis to an action; for which purpose he crossed James river at Westover where he was joined by a reinforcement from New York, and attempted by turning May 24. the left flank of the American army, to get into its rear. Lafayette was not in a condition to risk an engagement. His objects were the security of the public stores, the preservation of his small army for future services, and a junction with the Pennsylvania line which was on its march southward, under the command of General Wayne. As Lord Cornwallis crossed James river, he retired towards the upper country, inclining his route to the north in order to favour a junction with Wayne.

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[1] General Lafayette states that this movement also facilitated the transportation of some military stores to the southern army, which were greatly needed.

[2] General Philips died the day on which the army entered Petersburg. Arnold on succeeding to the command addressed a letter to Lafayette, which the American general refused to receive, informing the officer who brought it, and whom he treated in other respects with great politeness, that he would receive no letter from Arnold.—*Cor. of Lafayette.*

The fine horses found in the stables of private gentlemen, gave to the British general an efficient cavalry; and enabled him to mount so many infantry, as to move large detachments with unusual rapidity. With these advantages, he was so confident of overtaking and destroying his enemy, as to say exultingly in a letter which was intercepted, "the boy can not escape me." His sanguine hopes however were disappointed. Lafayette moved with so much celerity and caution as to convince Cornwallis of the impracticability of overtaking him, or of preventing his junction with Wayne.

After marching some distance up the northern side of Northanora, his lordship relinquished the pursuit, and turned his attention to other objects which were more attainable.

Military stores had been collected in various parts of the middle country, and, among others, at the Point of Fork, a point of land made by the confluence of the Rivanna and Fluvanna, the two branches of James river. Colonel Simcoe was detached with five hundred men against this post, which was protected by between five and six hundred new levies, and a few militia. Tarlton, with two hundred and fifty cavalry and mounted infantry, was ordered at the same time against Charlottesville, where the general assembly was in session. So rapid were his movements that a mere accident prevented his entering the town before any notice of his approach was given. A private gentleman, Mr. Jouiette, who was acquainted with a nearer route than the great road, hastened to Charlottesville on a fleet horse with the interesting intelligence, and entered the town about two hours before the British cavalry. Nearly all[1] the members of the legislature made their escape, and reassembled at Staunton, on the western side of the Blue Ridge. Tarlton, after destroying the stores at Charlottesville, proceeded down the Rivanna to the Point of Fork.

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[1] Seven fell into the hands of Tarlton.

The detachment commanded by Simcoe, being composed chiefly of infantry, could not move with equal celerity. That officer, however, conducted his march with so much secrecy and address, that Steuben seems to have been either unapprised of his approach, or to have had no accurate information of his numbers. Intelligence of the expedition to Charlottesville had reached him, and he had prudently employed himself in removing his stores from the Point of Fork to the south side of the Fluvanna.

The river was at the time unfordable; and the boats were all secured on the southern bank. Yet Steuben, suspecting the detachment of Simcoe to be the van of the British army, or apprehending that Tarlton might get into his rear, withdrew precipitately in the night, and marched near thirty miles, leaving behind him such stores as could not be removed. These were destroyed next morning by a small detachment of men who crossed the river in a few canoes.

To secure his junction with Wayne, and to keep open his communication towards the north, Lafayette had crossed the Rapidan.

These movements of the two armies had thrown Lord Cornwallis between Lafayette and the military stores which had been transported from Richmond up James river, and deposited at different places, but principally at Albemarle old court house, high up that river. To this place Lord Cornwallis directed his march.

The Marquis, having effected a junction with the Pennsylvania line consisting of eight hundred men, recrossed the Rapidan, and advanced with so much celerity towards the British army, that he encamped within a few miles of it, while upwards of a day's march from its point of destination.

Confident that the object of the American general must be to protect the magazines on the Fluvanna, Lord Cornwallis encamped at Elk island, and advanced his light troops to a position commanding the road, by which it was supposed the Americans must pass.

Lafayette however discovered in the night a nearer road which had long been disused; and the next morning the British general had the mortification to perceive that the American army had crossed the Rivanna, and taken a strong position behind the Mechunk creek, which, in a great measure, commanded the route leading from the camp of his lordship to Albemarle old court house. At this place a considerable reinforcement of mountain militia was received.

Apprehending the force opposed to him to be greater than it was in reality, and probably desirous of transferring the war to the lower country, Lord Cornwallis abandoned the objects he had pursued, and retired first to Richmond, and afterwards to Williamsburg. June.

The Marquis followed with cautious circumspection. On the 18th of June, he was reinforced by four or five hundred new levies under the Baron Steuben, which augmented his army to four thousand men, of whom two thousand were regulars. That of Lord Cornwallis was, probably, rather more numerous.

As the British army retreated to Williamsburg, Lafayette, who sought a partial, though he avoided a general engagement, pressed its rear with his light parties. Colonel Simcoe, who covered the retreat, was overtaken by Colonel Butler about six miles from Williamsburg, and a sharp action ensued. The Americans claimed the advantage; but were compelled to retire by the approach of the whole British army.

In the bold and rapid course taken by Lord Cornwallis through the lower and central parts of Virginia, much private as well as public property[1] was destroyed; and the resources of the state were considerably diminished; but no solid advantage was obtained. Although, from various causes, especially from a want of arms, and from that general repugnance which a harassed, unpaid militia, will universally manifest to military service, less resistance was encountered than was to be expected from the strength and population of the state; no disposition was openly manifested to join the royal standard, or to withdraw from the contest. The Marquis complained of "much slowness, and much carelessness in the country; but the dispositions of the people," he said, "were good, and they required only to be awakened." This, he thought, would be best effected by the presence of General Washington, an event for which he expressed the most anxious solicitude. But Washington deemed it of more importance to remain on the Hudson, for the purpose of digesting and conducting a grand plan of combined operations then meditated against New York, by the execution of which he counted more certainly on relieving the southern states, than by any other measure it was in his power to adopt.

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[1] While the British army overran the country, their ships sailed up the rivers, pillaged the farms, received the slaves who fled from their masters, and, in some instances reduced the houses to ashes. While they were in the Potowmac, a flag was sent on shore at Mount Vernon, requiring a supply of fresh provisions. The steward of General Washington, believing it to be his duty to save the property of his principal, and entertaining fears for the magnificent buildings of the Commander-in-chief, went on board with the flag, carried a supply of fresh provisions, asked the restoration of the slaves who had taken refuge in the fleet, and requested that the buildings might be spared. Mr. Lund Washington, to whom the general had entrusted the management of his estate, communicated these circumstances to him, and informed him that he too had sustained considerable losses. "I am sorry," said the general, in reply, "to hear of your loss; I am a little sorry to hear of my own. But that which gives me most concern is, that you should have gone on board the vessels of the enemy and furnished them with refreshments. It would have been a less painful circumstance to me to have heard, that in consequence of your non-compliance with their request, they

An express carrying letters, communicating to congress the result of his consultations on this subject, with the commanders of the land and naval forces of France, was intercepted in Jersey. The interesting disclosure made by these letters, alarmed Sir Henry Clinton for the safety of New York, and determined him to require the return of a part of the troops in Virginia. Supposing himself too weak, after complying with this requisition, to remain at Williamsburg, Lord Cornwallis took the resolution of retiring to Portsmouth.

July 4. In pursuance of this resolution, he marched from Williamsburg and encamped in such a manner as to cover the ford into the island of Jamestown. On the same evening, the Queen's rangers crossed over into the island; and the two succeeding days were employed in passing over the baggage.

The morning after the evacuation of Williamsburg, Lafayette

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had burnt my home and laid the plantation in ruins. You ought to have considered yourself as my representative, and should have reflected on the bad example of communicating with the enemy, and making a voluntary offer of refreshments to them with a view to prevent a conflagration."

changed his position, and pushed his best troops within nine miles of the British camp, with the intention of attempting their rear, when the main body should have passed into Jamestown.

Suspecting his design, Lord Cornwallis encamped the greater part of his army on the main land as compactly as possible, and displayed a few troops on the island in such a manner as, in appearance, to magnify their numbers. All the intelligence received by Lafayette concurred in the representation that the greater part of the British army had passed over to the island in the night. Believing this to be the fact, he detached some riflemen to harass their outposts, while he advanced at the head of the continental troops in order to cut off the rear.

July 6.

Every appearance was calculated to countenance the opinion he had formed. The British light parties were drawn in, and the piquets were forced by the riflemen without much resistance, but an advanced post which covered the encampment from the view of the Americans, was perseveringly maintained, though three of the officers commanding it were successively picked off by the riflemen. Lafayette, who arrived a little before sunset, suspected from the obstinacy with which this post was maintained, that it covered more than a rear guard, and determined to reconnoitre the camp, and judge of its strength from his own observation.[1] It was in a great measure concealed by woods; but from a tongue of land stretching into the river, he perceived the British force to be much more considerable than had been supposed, and hastened to call off his men.

He found Wayne closely engaged. A piece of artillery had been left weakly defended, which Wayne determined to seize. Scarcely was the attempt made, when he discovered the whole British army, arranged in order for battle, moving out against him. To retreat was impossible, and the boldest had become the safest measure. Under this impression he advanced rapidly, and, with his small detachment, not exceeding eight hundred men, made a gallant charge on the British line. A warm action ensued, which was kept up with great spirit until the arrival of Lafayette, who, perceiving Wayne to be out-flanked both on the right and left, ordered him to retreat and form in a line with the light infantry, who were drawn up about half a mile in his rear. The whole party then saved itself behind a morass.

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[1] Correspondence with Lafayette.

Fortunately for Lafayette, Lord Cornwallis did not improve the advantage he had gained. Suspecting this to be a stratagem of the American general to draw him into an ambuscade, a suspicion equally favoured by the hardiness and time of the attack, Lord Cornwallis, who supposed his enemy to be stronger than he was in reality, would allow no pursuit; and, in the course of the night, crossed over into the island, whence he, soon afterwards, proceeded to Portsmouth.

In this action, the Americans lost one hundred and eighteen men, among whom were ten officers; and two pieces of artillery were left on the field, the horses attached to them being killed. The British loss was less considerable.

All active operations were now suspended; and the harassed army of Lafayette was allowed some repose.

Although no brilliant service was performed by that young nobleman, the campaign in Virginia enhanced his military reputation, and raised him in the general esteem. That with so decided an inferiority of effective force, and especially of cavalry, he had been able to keep the field in an open country, and to preserve a considerable proportion of his military stores, as well as his army, was believed to furnish unequivocal evidence of the prudence and vigour of his conduct.

CHAPTER XXII

1781.

THE deep gloom which had enveloped the prospects of America in the commencement of the year, which darkened for a time in the south, had also spread itself over the north. The total incompetency of the political system adopted by the United States to their own preservation, became every day more apparent. Each state seemed fearful of doing too much, and of taking upon itself a larger portion of the common burden than was borne by its neighbour.

The resolutions of congress had called for an army of thirty-seven thousand men, to be in camp by the first of January. Had this requisition been made in time, it is not probable that so large a force could have been brought into the field; but it was made late, and then the difficulties and delays on the part of the several states, exceeded every reasonable calculation. The regular force drawn from Pennsylvania to Georgia inclusive, at no time, during this active and interesting campaign, amounted to three thousand effective men; and the states from New Hampshire to New Jersey inclusive, so late as the month of April, had furnished only five thousand infantry. Of these, the returns for that month exhibit, in the northern department, less than three thousand effectives. The cavalry and artillery, at no time, amounted to one thousand men. This small army was gradually and slowly augmented so as, in the month of May, to exhibit a total of near seven thousand men, of whom rather more than four thousand might have been relied on for action.

The prospects for the campaign were rendered still more unpromising by the failure of supplies for the support of the troops. The long expected clothing from Europe had not arrived; and the want of provisions[a] furnished a still more serious cause of alarm.

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[1] See note, No. XVIII at the end of the volume.

After congress had come to the resolution of emitting no more bills on the credit of the continent, the duty of supplying the army with provisions necessarily devolved on the states, who were required to furnish certain specified articles for the subsistence of the troops, according to a ratio established by the federal government. These requisitions had been neglected to such a degree as to excite fears that the soldiers must be disbanded from the want of food.

To increase the general embarrassment, the quartermaster department was destitute of funds, and unable to transport provisions or other stores from place to place, but by means of impressment supported by a military force. This measure had been repeated, especially in New York, until it excited so much disgust and irritation among the people, that the Commander-in-chief was under serious apprehensions of actual resistance to his authority.

While in this state of deplorable imbecility, intelligence from every quarter announced increasing dangers.

Information was received that an expedition was preparing in Canada against Fort Pitt, to be conducted by Sir John Johnston, and Colonel Conelly; and it was understood that many, in the country threatened with invasion, were ready to join the British standard. The Indians too had entered into formidable combinations, endangering the whole extent of the western frontier.

In addition to these alarming circumstances, some vessels had arrived at Crown Point from Canada, with information that three thousand men had been assembled on the lakes, for the purpose of attempting, once more, an invasion from that quarter.

This information, though unfounded, was believed to be true, and was, at that critical moment, the more alarming, because a correspondence of a criminal nature had just been discovered between some persons in Albany and in Canada. A letter intercepted by Generals Schuyler and Clinton, stated the disaffection of particular settlements, the provision made in those settlements for the subsistence of an invading army, and their readiness to join such army.

This intelligence from the northern frontier derived increased interest from the ambiguous conduct observed by the inhabitants of that tract of country which now constitutes the state of Vermont. They had settled lands within the chartered limits of New York, under grants from the governor of New Hampshire; and had, early in the war, declared themselves independent, and exercised the powers of self-government. The state of New York, however, still continuing to assert her claim of sovereignty, the controversy on this delicate subject had become so violent as to justify the apprehension that, in the opinion of the people of Vermont, the restoration of British authority was an evil not of greater magnitude, than the establishment of that of New York. The declaration was openly made that, if not admitted into the union as an independent state, they held themselves at liberty to make a separate peace; and some negotiations had been commenced, which were believed to manifest a disposition in Vermont, to abandon the common cause of America.

Accustomed to contemplate all public events which might grow out of the situation of the United States, and to prepare for them while at a distance, the American chief was not depressed by this state of American affairs. With a mind happily tempered by nature, and improved by experience, those fortunate events which had occasionally brightened the prospects of his country, never relaxed his exertions, or lessened his precautions; nor could the most disastrous state of things drive him to despair. Although entirely uncertain what operation he might be enabled to undertake during the approaching campaign, he had adopted such preparatory steps as might enable him to turn to advantage any fortunate incident which might occur. In consequence of conferences previously held with the Count de Rochambeau, for the purpose of digesting a system adapted to contingent events, orders were transmitted to that officer, directing him to be in readiness to march as large a body of the French troops to the North River, as could be spared from the protection of the fleet.

Early in May, the Count de Barras, who had been appointed to the command of the French fleet stationed on the American coast arrived in Boston accompanied by the Viscount de Rochambeau, and brought the long expected information from the cabinet of Versailles, respecting the naval armament designed to act in the American seas. Twenty ships of the line, to be commanded by the Count de Grasse, were destined for the West Indies, twelve of which were to proceed to the continent of America, and might be expected to arrive in the month of July.

An interview between General Washington and the Count de Rochambeau immediately took place at Weathersfield, in which it was determined to unite the troops of France to those of America on the Hudson, and to proceed against New York. The regular army at that station was estimated at four thousand five hundred men,[1] and though it was understood that Sir Henry Clinton would be able to reinforce it with five or six thousand militia, it was believed that the post could not be maintained without recalling a considerable part of the troops from the south; in which event, the allied army might be employed advantageously in that part of the union.

The prospect of expelling the British from New York roused the northern states from that apathy into which they appeared to be sinking and vigorous measures were taken to fill their regiments. Yet those measures were not completely successful. In the month of June, when the army took the field, and encamped at Peekskill, its effective numbers did not exceed five thousand men.

Such was the American force in the north, with which the campaign of 1781 was opened. It fell so far short of that on which the calculations had been made at Weathersfield, as to excite serious doubts respecting the propriety of adhering to the plan there concerted, although some compensation was made for this deficiency on the part of the states by the arrival of a reinforcement of fifteen hundred men to the army of Rochambeau under convoy of a fifty gun frigate.

To supply even this army with provisions, required much greater exertions than had ever been made since the system of requisitions had been substituted for that of purchasing. The hope of terminating the war produced these exertions. The legislatures of the New England states took up the subject in earnest, and passed resolutions for raising the necessary supplies. But until these resolutions could be executed, the embarrassments of the army continued; and, for some time after the troops had taken the field, there was reason to apprehend, either that the great objects of the campaign must be relinquished for want of provisions, or that coercive means must still be used.

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[1] Sir H. Clinton in a letter to Lord Cornwallis, dated June 11, 1781, states his effective force at ten thousand nine hundred and thirty-one.

New England not furnishing flour, this important article was to be drawn from New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The two first states were much exhausted; and the application to Pennsylvania did not promise to be very successful. On this subject, therefore, serious fears existed.

These were removed, in a great degree, by the activity and exertions of an individual.

The management of the finances had been lately committed to Mr. Robert Morris, a delegate to congress from the state of Pennsylvania. This gentleman united considerable political talents to a degree of mercantile enterprise, information, and credit, seldom equalled in any country. He had accepted this arduous appointment on the condition of being allowed the year 1781 to make his arrangements; during which time, the department was to be conducted by those already employed, with the resources which government could command. But the critical state of public affairs, and the pressing wants of the army, furnished irresistible motives for changing his original determination, and entering immediately on the duties of his office. The occasion required that he should bring his private credit in aid of the public resources, and pledge himself personally and extensively, for articles of absolute necessity which could not be otherwise obtained. Condemning the system of violence and of legal fraud, which had too long been practised, as being calculated to defeat its own object, he sought the gradual restoration of confidence by the only means which could restore it:—a punctual and faithful compliance with his engagements. Herculean as was this task in the existing derangement of American finances, he entered upon it courageously; and, if not completely successful, certainly did more than could have been supposed possible with the means placed in his hands. It is, in no inconsiderable degree, to be attributed to him, that the very active and decisive operations of the campaign were not impeded, perhaps defeated, by a failure of the means for transporting military stores, and feeding the army.

On determining to enter on the duties of his office, Mr. Morris laid before congress the plan of a national bank, whose notes were to be receivable from the respective states as specie, into the treasury of the United States. Congress gave its full approbation to this beneficial institution; and passed an ordinance for its incorporation.

Important as was this measure to the future operations of the army, a contract entered into with the state of Pennsylvania was of still more immediate utility.

After furnishing flour to relieve the wants of the moment on his private credit, Mr. Morris proposed to take on himself the task of complying with all the specific requisitions made on Pennsylvania, and to rely for reimbursement on the taxes imposed by law, to be collected under his direction. This proposition being accepted, the contract was made; and supplies which the government found itself unable to furnish, were raised by an individual.

As the French troops approached the North River, intelligence was received that a large detachment from New York had made an incursion into Jersey, under appearances indicating an intention not to return immediately. This being thought a favourable moment for gaining the posts on the north end of York island, a plan was formed for seizing them by a *coup de main.* General Washington fixed on the night of the second of July for making the attempt; it being supposed that the Count de Rochambeau might join the American army at Kingsbridge by that time. An aid-de-camp was therefore despatched to meet that officer with letters explaining the enterprise, and requesting him to meet the Commander-in-chief at the time and place appointed.

With the proposed attack on these works, an attempt to cut off some light troops stationed on the outside of Kingsbridge at Morrissania, under the command of Colonel Delaney, was to be combined. This part of the plan was to be executed by the Duke de Lauzun, to whose legion Sheldon's dragoons, and a small body of continental troops dispersed on the lines, under the command of General Waterbury, were to be added.

On the part of the Americans, all that could contribute to the success of this enterprise was done. A strong detachment commanded by General Lincoln, which fell down the river in boats with muffled oars, reached its ground undiscovered on the night of the first of July; and the army, conducted by General Washington, marched to Valentine's hill. The next day, Lincoln perceived that the detachment had returned from Jersey, that the British were encamped in great force on the north end of the island, and that a ship of war watched the landing place. These unexpected obstacles having defeated the design upon the works, he proceeded to execute his eventual orders of co-operation with the Duke de Lauzun. These were, after landing above Spiken Devil Creek, to march to the high ground in front of Kingsbridge, and there conceal his detachment, until the attack on Delaney's corps should commence.

The Duke de Lauzun did not arrive, and the return of day betrayed Lincoln. A British corps advanced upon him; on hearing which, General Washington put his troops in motion, and, on his approach, the British troops retired into the island.

Both parts of the plan having thus failed, the army retreated to Dobbs' ferry, where it was joined by the Count de Rochambeau on the sixth of July.

The thanks of the Commander-in-chief were given to that officer in general orders, for the unremitting zeal with which he had proceeded to form his so long wished for junction with the American army; and he was requested to convey to the officers and soldiers under his command, the grateful sense which the general entertained of the cheerfulness with which they had performed so long and laborious a march at so hot a season.

The utmost exertions were made for the grand enterprise against New York. But as the execution of any plan that could be formed, depended on events which were uncertain, the Commander-in-chief directed his attention to other objects, to be pursued if that which was most desirable should prove unattainable. Should the siege of New York become unadvisable, his views were turned to Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia.

Early in August, the apprehension that he should be unable to accomplish his favourite object, began to influence his conduct. Letters from the Marquis de Lafayette announced that a large portion of the troops in Virginia were embarked, and that their destination was believed to be New York. This intelligence induced him to turn his attention more seriously to the south; but, to conceal from Sir Henry Clinton this eventual change of plan, his arrangements were made secretly, and the preparations for acting against New York were continued. A reinforcement from Europe of near three thousand men, induced Sir Henry Clinton to countermand the orders he had given to Lord Cornwallis to detach a part of the army in Virginia to his aid; and also to direct that nobleman to take a strong position on the Chesapeake, from which he might execute the designs meditated against the states lying on that bay, so soon as the storm which threatened the British power for the moment, should blow over. In a few days after the arrival of this reinforcement, the Count de Barras gave General Washington the interesting information, that De Grasse was to have sailed from Cape Francis for the Chesapeake, on the third of August, with from twenty-five to twenty-nine ships of the line, having on board three thousand two hundred soldiers; and that he had made engagements with the officers commanding the land and naval forces of Spain in the West Indies, to return to those seas by the middle of October.

This intelligence manifested the necessity of determining immediately, and positively, on the object against which the combined forces should be directed. The shortness of the time appropriated by De Grasse for his continuance on the American coast, the apparent unwillingness of the naval officers to attempt to force a passage into the harbour of New York, and the failure of the states to comply with the requisitions which had been made on them for men, decided in favour of operations to the south; and Lafayette was requested to make such a disposition of his army as should be best calculated to prevent Lord Cornwallis from saving himself by a sudden march to Charleston.[1]

Conformably to the intelligence communicated by the Count de Barras, the Count de Grasse arrived in the Chesapeake late in August with twenty-eight ships of the line and several frigates. At Cape Henry he found an officer despatched by Lafayette with full intelligence of the situation of the armies in Virginia. Lord Cornwallis had collected his whole force at Yorktown and Gloucester Point, which he was fortifying assiduously; and the Marquis had taken a position on James river.

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[1] In pursuance of these orders, Wayne was detached to the south side of James river, under the pretext of reinforcing Greene, but was ordered to maintain a position which would enable him to intercept and oppose the march of Lord Cornwallis, should he attempt to force his way to Charleston. Lafayette was on the alert to co-operate with Wayne in the event of such a movement.—*Cor. with Lafayette.*

August.

In consequence of this information, four ships of the line and several frigates were detached to block up the mouth of York river, and convey the land forces brought from the West Indies, under the command of the Marquis de St. Simon, up the James to join Lafayette, who, on receiving this reinforcement, took post at Williamsburg. In the meantime, the fleet lay at anchor just within the capes. On the 25th of August the Count de Barras [1] sailed from Newport for the Chesapeake.

Rodney was apprised of the destination of De Grasse, but seems not to have suspected that the whole fleet would sail for the continent of America. Supposing therefore that a part of his squadron would be sufficient to maintain an equality of naval force in the American seas, he detached Sir Samuel Hood to the continent with only fourteen sail of the line. That officer arrived at Sandy Hook on the twenty-eighth of August.

Admiral Greaves, who had succeeded Arbuthnot in the command of the fleet on the American station, lay in the harbour of New York with seven ships of the line, only five of which were fit for service. On the day that Hood appeared and gave information that De Grasse was probably on the coast, intelligence was also received that De Barras had sailed from Newport.

The ships fit for sea were ordered out of the harbour; and Greaves, with the whole fleet, consisting of nineteen sail of the line, proceeded in quest of the French.

Not suspecting the strength of De Grasse, he hoped to fall in with one or the other of their squadrons, and to fight it separately.

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[1] This admiral was the senior of De Grasse, to whom the command of the expedition had been entrusted, and was therefore authorized by the minister of marine, to cruise on the coast of Newfoundland while his ships should join the grand fleet. He preferred serving under his junior officer.—*Cor. of Lafayette.*

Early in the morning of the 5th of September, while the French fleet lay at anchor just within the Chesapeake, the British squadron was descried. Orders were immediately given by De Grasse to form the line, and put to sea. About four in the afternoon, the action commenced between the headmost ships, and continued until sunset. Several ships were much damaged, but neither admiral could claim the victory. For five successive days the hostile fleets continued within view of each other. After which, De Grasse returned to his former station within the capes. At his anchorage ground he found De Barras with the squadron from Newport, and fourteen transports laden with heavy artillery, and military stores proper for carrying on a siege. The British admiral approaching the capes, found the entrance of the Chesapeake defended by a force with which he was unable to contend, and therefore bore away for New York.

Sept. 10

General Washington had determined to entrust the defence of the Hudson to General Heath, and to command the southern expedition in person. All the French, and a detachment amounting to upwards of two thousand men from the continental army, were destined for this service. On the 19th of August, Hazen's regiment and the Jersey line, were directed to pass the Hudson at Dobbs' ferry, and take a position between Springfield and Chatham, where they were to cover some bake-houses to be constructed in the neighbourhood, for the purpose of veiling the real designs of the American chief, and of exciting fears for Staten Island. On the same day, the whole army was put in motion; and on the twenty-fifth the passage of the river was completed.

To conceal as long as possible the real object of this movement, the march of the army was continued until the thirty-first, in such a direction as to keep up fears for New York; and a considerable degree of address was used to countenance the opinion that the real design was against that place. The letters which had been intercepted by Sir Henry Clinton favoured this deception; and so strong was the impression they made that, even after it became necessary for the combined army to leave the route leading down the Hudson, he is stated to have retained his fears for New York, and not to have suspected the real object of his adversary until he had approached the Delaware;[1] and it had become too late to obstruct the progress of the allied army towards Virginia. He then resolved to make every exertion in his power to relieve Lord Cornwallis, and in the mean time to act offensively in the north. An expedition was planned against New London, in Connecticut, and a strong detachment, under the command of General Arnold, was embarked on board a fleet of transports, which landed early in the morning of the 6th of September on both sides the harbour, about three miles from the town.

New London is a seaport town on the west side of the Thames. A fort called fort Trumbull, and a redoubt had been constructed just below it, on the same side of the river; and opposite to it, on Groton hill, was fort Griswold, a strong square fortification, but not fully manned. General Arnold, who commanded in person the troops that landed on the western side of the harbour, advanced immediately against the posts on that side. These being untenable were evacuated on his approach; and he took possession of them with inconsiderable loss. To prevent the escape of the vessels up the river, Lieutenant Colonel Eyre, who commanded the division which landed on the Groton side of the harbour, had been ordered to storm fort Griswold, which had been represented to Arnold as too incomplete to make any serious resistance. But the place being of some strength, and the approach to it difficult, Colonel Ledyard, who commanded it with a garrison of one hundred and sixty men, determined to defend it. On his refusing to surrender, the British assaulted it on three sides, and overcoming the difficulties opposed to them, made a lodgement on the ditch and fraized work, and entered the embrasures with charged bayonets. Further resistance being hopeless, the action ceased on the part of the Americans, and Colonel Ledyard delivered his sword to the commanding officer of the assailants. Irritated by the obstinacy of the defence, and the loss sustained in the assault, the British officer on whom the command had devolved, tarnished the glory of victory by the inhuman use he made of it. Instead of respecting, with the generous spirit of a soldier, the gallantry which he had subdued, he indulged the vindictive feelings which had been roused by the slaughter of his troops. In the account given of this affair by Governor Trumbull to General Washington, he says, "The sword presented by Colonel Ledyard was immediately plunged into his bosom, and the carnage was kept up until the greater part of the garrison was killed or wounded."

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[1] The first indication given by Sir Henry Clinton of suspecting the southern expedition, is in his letter to Lord Cornwallis of the 2nd of September, in which he says, "By intelligence I have this day received, it would seem that Washington is moving southward."

In this fierce assault, Colonel Eyre was killed, and Major Montgomery, the second in command, also fell, as he entered the American works. The total loss of the assailants was not much less than two hundred men.

The town of New London, and the stores contained in it, were consumed by fire. To escape the odium which invariably attends the wanton destruction of private property, this fire was attributed to accident; but all the American accounts unite in declaring it to have been intentional.

The march of General Washington was not arrested by this excursion into New England. Having made the arrangements for the transportation of his army down the Chesapeake, he proceeded in person to Virginia, attended by the Count de Rochambeau, and the Chevalier de Chatelleux; and, on the 14th of September, reached Williamsburg:[1] accompanied by Rochambeau, Chatelleux, Knox, and Du Portail, he immediately repaired to the fleet, and a plan of co-operation was adjusted on board the Ville de Paris, conforming to his wish in every respect, except that the Count de Grasse declined complying with a proposition to station some of his ships in the river above Yorktown, thinking it too hazardous.

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[1] While the American troops were incamped at Williamsburg and the French fleet lay in the bay, the Count de Grasse, circumscribed in point of time, and therefore, unwilling to await the arrival of the army from the north, urged Lafayette to attack the British in Yorktown; offering to aid him not only with all the marines of the fleet but with as many seamen as he should require. The Marquis de St. Simon, an officer of great experience, united himself with the admiral in pressing this measure. He stated that, the works of Cornwallis being incomplete, Yorktown and Gloucester might, in all probability, be carried by storm, if attacked by superior numbers. The temptation was great for a young general scarcely twenty-four years of age. A full excuse for the attempt was found in the declaration of De Grasse, that he could not wait for the arrival of the troops from the north. Success would have given unrivalled brilliancy to the reputation of Lafayette, but would necessarily have cost much blood. Lafayette refused to sacrifice the soldiers which were confided to him to his personal glory, and persuaded De Grasse to await the arrival of Washington and Rochambeau, when the capture of Cornwallis would be certainly made without the waste of human life.—*Cor. with Lafayette.*

While the close investment of the British army was delayed, only until the troops from the north should arrive, serious apprehensions were excited that the brilliant results confidently anticipated from the superiority of the land and naval forces of the allies, would be put in imminent hazard.

Information was received that a reinforcement of six ships of the line under Admiral Digby, had reached New York. Confident that the British fleet, thus augmented, would attempt every thing for the relief of Lord Cornwallis, De Grasse expected to be attacked by a force not much inferior to his own. Thinking his station within the Chesapeake unfavourable for a naval combat, he designed to change it, and communicated to General Washington his intention to leave a few frigates to block up the mouths of James and York rivers, and to put to sea with his fleet in quest of the British. If they should not have left the harbour of New York, he purposed to block them up in that place; supposing that his operations in that quarter would be of more service to the common cause, than his remaining in the bay, an idle spectator of the siege of York.

The Commander-in-chief was much alarmed at this communication. Should the admiral put to sea, the winds and many accidents might prevent his return to the Chesapeake. During his absence, a temporary naval superiority might be acquired by the British in those waters, and the army of Lord Cornwallis might be placed in perfect security. The movement would expose to the caprice of fortune, an object of vast importance, which was now reduced almost to certainty. The admiral was therefore entreated to preserve his station.

Fortunately, the wishes of the general prevailed, and the admiral consented to relinquish those plans of active enterprise which his thirst for military glory had suggested, and to maintain a station which the American general deemed so conducive to the interest of the allies.

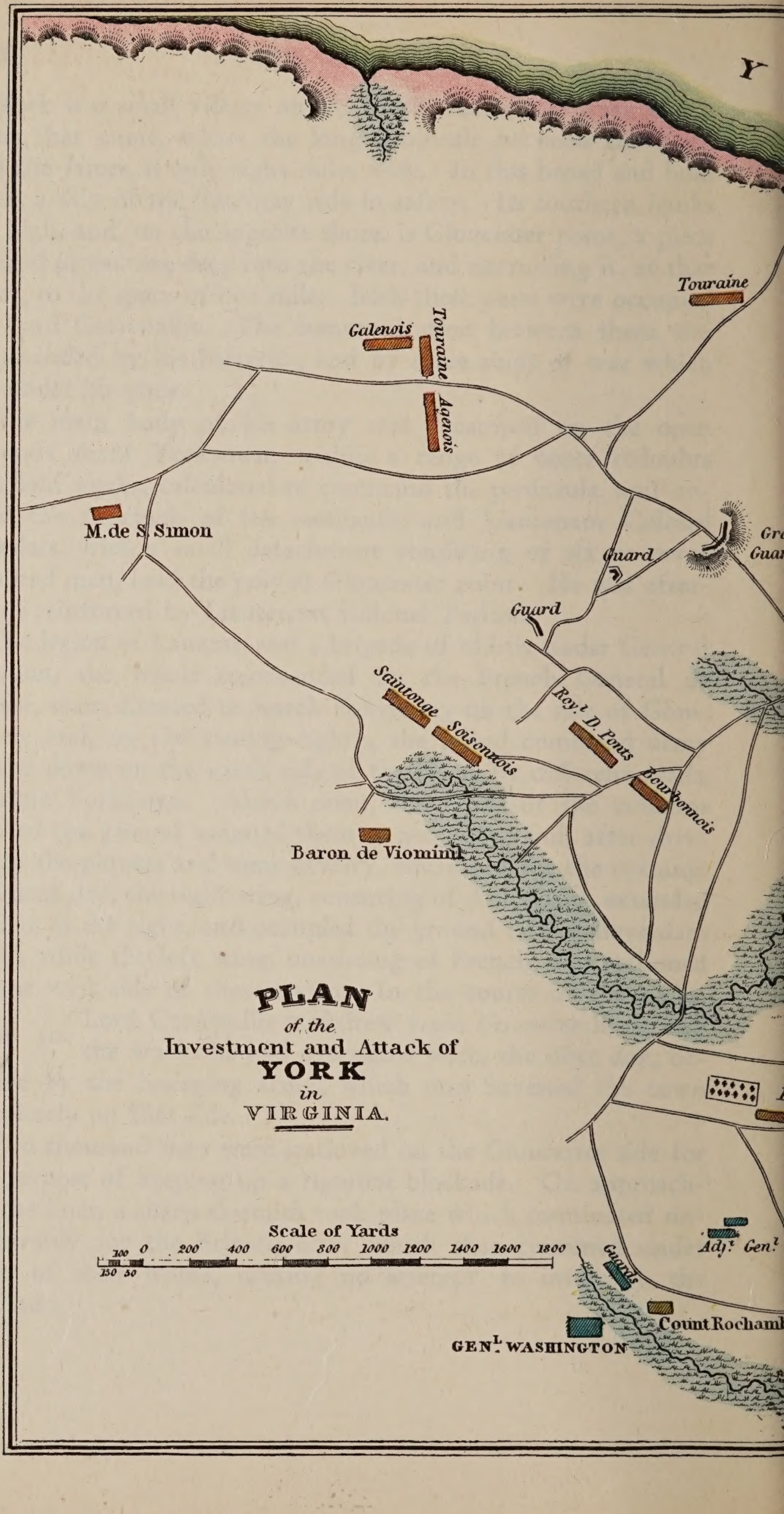
On the 25th of September, the last division of the allied troops arrived in James river, and were disembarked at the landing near Williamsburg; soon after which, the preparations for the siege were completed.

York is a small village on the south side of the river which bears that name, where the long peninsula between the York and the James, is only eight miles wide. In this broad and bold river, a ship of the line may ride in safety. Its southern banks are high, and, on the opposite shore, is Gloucester point, a piece of land projecting deep into the river, and narrowing it, at that place, to the space of one mile. Both these posts were occupied by Lord Cornwallis. The communication between them was commanded by his batteries, and by some ships of war which lay under his guns.

The main body of his army was encamped on the open grounds about Yorktown, within a range of outer redoubts and field works, calculated to command the peninsula, and impede the approach of the assailants; and Lieutenant Colonel Dundass, with a small detachment consisting of six or seven hundred men, held the post at Gloucester point. He was afterwards reinforced by Lieutenant Colonel Tarlton.

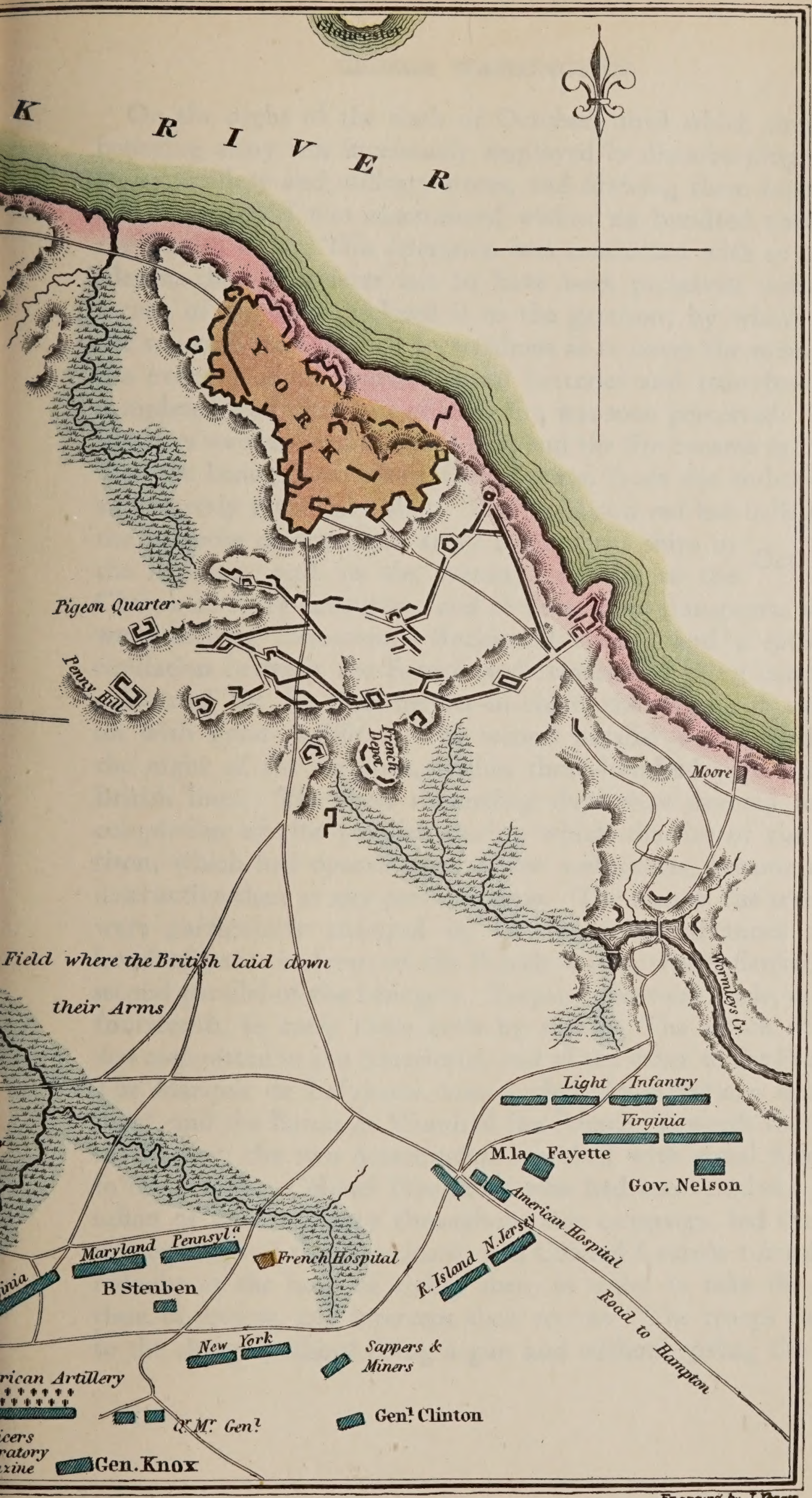
The legion of Lauzun, and a brigade of militia under General Weedon, the whole commanded by the French General de Choisé, were directed to watch the enemy on the side of Gloucester; and, on the twenty-eighth, the grand combined army moved down on the south side of the river, by different roads, towards Yorktown. About noon, the heads of the columns reached the ground assigned them respectively; and, after driving in the piquets and some cavalry, encamped for the evening. The next day, the right wing, consisting of Americans, extended farther to the right, and occupied the ground east of Beverdam creek; while the left wing, consisting of French, was stationed on the west side of that stream. In the course of the night, Sept. 30. Lord Cornwallis withdrew from his outer lines; and the works he had evacuated were, the next day, occupied by the besieging army, which now invested the town completely on that side.

Two thousand men were stationed on the Gloucester side for the purpose of keeping up a rigorous blockade. On approaching the lines, a sharp skirmish took place which terminated unfavourably for the British; after which they remained under cover of their works, making no attempt to interrupt the blockade.



PLAN
of the
Investment and Attack of
YORK
in
VIRGINIA.

Y
Touraine
Galenois
Touraine
Agenois
M. de S. Simon
Gr
Guar
Guard
Guard
Saintonge
Soisonnois
Roy.l D. Ponts
Bourbonnois
Baron de Viomini
Scale of Yards
100
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1400
1600
1800
150
50
Guards
Adj.t Gen.l
Count Rochaml
GEN.L WASHINGTON


Gloucester
K R I V E R
Y O R K
Pigeon Quarter
Penny Hill
French Depot
Moore
Wormleys Cr.
Field where the British laid down their Arms
Light Infantry
Virginia
M.la Fayette
Gov. Nelson
American Hospital
Road to Hampton
R. Island
N. Jersey
Maryland
Pennsyla
French Hospital
inia
B Steuben
New York
Sappers & Miners
rican Artillery
Genl. Clinton
Qr. Mr. Genl.
icers
ratory
zine
Gen. Knox

Engraved by J. Yeager.

On the night of the sixth of October, until which time the besieging army was incessantly employed in disembarking their heavy artillery and military stores, and drawing them to camp, the first parallel was commenced within six hundred yards of the British lines. This operation was conducted with so much silence, that it appears not to have been perceived until the return of daylight disclosed it to the garrison; by which time the trenches were in such forwardness as to cover the men. By the evening of the ninth, several batteries and redoubts were completed, and the effect of their fire was soon perceived. New batteries were opened the next day, and the fire became so heavy that the besieged withdrew their cannon from the embrasures, and scarcely returned a shot. The shells and red hot balls from the batteries of the allied army reached the ships in the harbour, and, in the evening, set fire to the Charon of forty-four guns, and to three large transports, which were entirely consumed. Reciprocal esteem, and a spirit of emulation between the French and Americans, being carefully cultivated by the Commander-in-chief, the siege was carried on with great rapidity. The second parallel was opened, on the night of the eleventh, within three hundred yards of the British lines. The three succeeding days were devoted to the completion of this parallel, during which the fire of the garrison, which had opened several new embrasures, became more destructive than at any previous time. The men in the trenches were particularly annoyed by two redoubts advanced three hundred yards in front of the British works, which flanked the second parallel of the besiegers. Preparations were made, on the fourteenth, to carry them both by storm. The attack of one was committed to the Americans, and of the other to the French. The Marquis de Lafayette commanded the American detachment, and the Baron de Viominel the French. Towards the close of the day, the two detachments marched with equal firmness to the assault. Colonel Hamilton, who had commanded a battalion of light infantry throughout this campaign, led the advanced corps of the Americans; and Colonel Laurens turned the redoubt at the head of eighty men, in order to take the garrison in reverse, and intercept their retreat. The troops rushed to the charge without firing a gun and without giving the sap-

Oct. 10.

pers time to remove the abattis and palisades. Passing over them, they assaulted the works with irresistible impetuosity on all sides at the same time, and entered them with such rapidity that their loss was inconsiderable.[1] This redoubt was defended by Major Campbell, with some inferior officers, and forty-five privates. The major, a captain, a subaltern, and seventeen privates, were made prisoners, and eight privates were killed while the assailants were entering the works.

The redoubt attacked by the French was defended by a greater number of men; and the resistance, being greater, was not overcome so quickly, or with so little loss. One hundred and twenty men, commanded by a lieutenant colonel, were in this work, eighteen of whom were killed, and forty-two, including a captain and two subaltern officers, were made prisoners. The assailants lost, in killed and wounded, near one hundred men.

The Commander-in-chief was highly gratified with the active courage displayed in these assaults. Speaking of it in his diary, he says—"The bravery exhibited by the attacking troops was emulous and praiseworthy. Few cases have exhibited greater proofs of intrepidity, coolness, and firmness, than were shown on this occasion." The orders of the succeeding day, congratulating the army on the capture of these important works, expressed a high sense of the judicious dispositions and gallant conduct of both the Baron de Viominel and the Marquis de Lafayette, and requested them to convey to every officer and man engaged in the enterprise, the acknowledgments of the Commander-in-chief for the spirit and rapidity with which they advanced to the attack, and for the admirable firmness with which they supported themselves under the fire

Oct. 15.

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[1] One serjeant and eight privates were killed; and one lieutenant colonel, four captains, one subaltern, one serjeant, and twenty-five rank and file, were wounded.

The irritation produced by the recent carnage in fort Griswold had not so far subdued the humanity of the American character as to induce retaliation. Not a man was killed except in action. "Incapable," said Colonel Hamilton in his report, "of imitating examples of barbarity, and forgetting recent provocation, the soldiery spared every man that ceased to resist." Mr. Gordon, in his History of the American War, states the orders given by Lafayette, with the approbation of Washington, to have directed that every man in the redoubt, after its surrender, should be put to the sword. These sanguinary orders, so repugnant to the character of the Commander-in-chief and of Lafayette, were never given. There is no trace of them among the papers of General Washington; and Colonel Hamilton, who took a part in the enterprise, which assures his perfect knowledge of every material occurrence, has publicly contradicted the statement. It has been also contradicted by Lafayette.

of the enemy without returning a shot. "The general reflects," conclude the orders, "with the highest degree of pleasure, on the confidence which the troops of the two nations must hereafter have in each other. Assured of mutual support, he is convinced there is no danger which they will not cheerfully encounter, no difficulty which they will not bravely overcome."[1]

During the same night these redoubts were included in the second parallel; and, in the course of the next day, some howitzers were placed in them, which, by five in the afternoon, were opened on the besieged.

The situation of Lord Cornwallis was becoming desperate. His works were sinking, in every quarter, under the fire of the besiegers. The batteries already playing on him had silenced nearly all his guns, and the second parallel was about to open, which must in a few hours render the town untenable. To suspend a catastrophe which appeared almost inevitable, he resolved on attempting to retard the completion of the second parallel, by a vigorous sortie against two batteries which appeared to be in the greatest forwardness, and were guarded by French troops. The party making this sortie was led by Lieutenant Colonel Abercrombie, who attacked the two batteries with great impetuosity about four in the morning, and carried both with inconsiderable loss; but the Guards from the trenches immediately advancing on the assailants, they retreated without being able to effect any thing of importance.

Oct. 16.

About four in the afternoon the besiegers opened several batteries in their second parallel; and it was apparent that in the course of the ensuing day, the whole line of batteries in that parallel would be ready to play on the town. The works of the besieged were not in a condition to sustain so tremendous a fire. In this extremity, Lord Cornwallis formed the bold design of forcing his way to New York.

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[1] General Lafayette states a fact which proves in an eminent degree the good feelings of the American soldiers towards their allies. While encamped together under his command at Williamsburg, the Americans, who were *bivouacked*, saw their allies under tents without a murmur; and saw them supplied regularly with rations of flour for three days from the American magazines, while corn meal was measured out very irregularly to themselves. The superior officers lent their horses to those of France and walked themselves. Although their general was himself a Frenchman, the Americans saw not only without jealousy, but with pleasure, every preference given to their allies.

He determined to leave his sick and baggage behind, and, crossing over in the night with his effectives to the Gloucester shore, to attack De Choisé. After cutting to pieces or dispersing the troops under that officer, he intended to mount his infantry on the horses taken from that detachment, and on others to be seized on the road, and, by a rapid march to gain the fords of the great rivers, and, forcing his way through Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Jersey, to form a junction with the army in New York.[1]

This desperate attempt would be extremely hazardous; but the situation of the British general had become so hopeless, that it could scarcely be changed for the worse.

Boats prepared under other pretexts were held in readiness to receive the troops at ten in the evening, and convey them over the river. The arrangements were made with such secrecy that the first embarkation arrived at the point unperceived, and part of the troops were landed, when a sudden and violent storm interrupted the execution of this hazardous plan, and drove the boats down the river. The storm continued till near daylight, when the boats returned. But the plan was necessarily abandoned, and the boats were sent to bring back the soldiers, who were relanded on the southern shore in the course of the forenoon without much loss.

In the morning of the seventeenth, several new batteries were opened in the second parallel, which poured in a weight of fire not to be resisted. The place being no longer tenable, Lord Cornwallis, about ten in the forenoon, beat a parley, and proposed a cessation of hostilities for twenty-four hours, that commissioners might meet at Moore's house, which was just in the rear of the first parallel, to settle terms for the surrender of the posts of York and Gloucester. To this letter General Washington returned an immediate answer declaring his "ardent desire to spare the further effusion of blood, and his readiness to listen to such terms as were admissible;" but as in the present crisis he could not consent to lose a moment in fruitless negotiations, he desired that "previous to the meeting of the commissioners, the proposals of his lordship might be transmitted in writing, for which purpose a suspension of hostilities for two hours should be granted. The general propositions[1] stated by Lord Cornwallis as forming the basis of the capitulation, though not all admissible, being such as led to the opinion that no great difficulty would occur in adjusting the terms, the suspension of hostilities was prolonged for the night. In the mean time, to avoid the delay of useless discussion, the Commander-in-chief drew up and proposed such articles[2] as he would be willing to grant. These were transmitted to Lord Cornwallis with the accompanying declaration that, if he approved them, commissioners might be immediately appointed to digest them into form. Oct. 18. In consequence of this message, the Viscount De Noailles, and Lieutenant Colonel Laurens, were met next day by Colonel Dundass and Major Ross; but, being unable to adjust the terms of capitulation definitively, only a rough draught of them could be prepared, which was to be submitted to the consideration of the British general. Determined not to expose himself to those accidents which time might produce, General Washington could not permit any suspense on the part of Lord Cornwallis. He therefore immediately directed the rough articles which had been prepared by the commissioners to be fairly transcribed, and Oct. 19. sent them to his lordship early next morning, with a letter expressing his expectation that they would be signed by eleven, and that the garrison would march out by two in the afternoon. Finding all attempts to obtain better terms unavailing, Lord Cornwallis submitted to a necessity no longer to be avoided, and, on the 19th of October, surrendered the posts of Yorktown and Gloucester Point, with their garrisons, and the ships in the harbour with their seamen, to the land and naval forces of America and France.

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[1] Stedman, Annual Register, letter of Lord Cornwallis.

The army, artillery, arms, military chest, and public stores of every denomination, were surrendered to General Washington; the ships and seamen, to the Count de Grasse. The total number of prisoners,[3] excluding seamen, rather exceeded seven thousand men. The loss sustained by the garrison during the siege, amounted to five hundred and fifty-two men, including six officers.

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[1] See note, No. XIX at the end of the volume.

[2] See note, No. XX at the end of the volume.

[3] The return of prisoners contained two generals, thirty-one field officers, three hundred and twenty-six captains and subalterns, seventy-one regimental staff, six

Lord Cornwallis endeavoured to introduce an article into the capitulation, for the security of those Americans who had joined the British army; but the subject was declared to belong to the civil department, and the article was rejected. Its object, however, was granted without appearing to concede it. His lordship was permitted to send the Bonetta sloop of war untouched, with despatches to Sir Henry Clinton; and the Americans whose conduct had been most offensive to their countrymen were embarked on board this vessel.

The allied army may be estimated, including militia, at sixteen thousand men. In the course of this siege, they lost, in killed and wounded, about three hundred. The treaty was opened on the eleventh day after the ground was broken by the besiegers, and the capitulation was signed on the thirteenth. The whole army merited great approbation; but, from the nature of the service, the artillerists and engineers were enabled to distinguish themselves particularly. Generals du Portail and Knox were each promoted to the rank of Major General; and Colonel Govion, and Captain Rochfontaine, of the corps of engineers, were each advanced a grade by brevet. In addition to the officers belonging to those departments, Generals Lincoln, De Lafayette, and Steuben, were particularly mentioned by the Commander-in-chief, in his orders issued the day after the capitulation; and terms of peculiar warmth were applied to Governor Nelson, who continued in the field during the whole siege, at the head of the militia of Virginia; and also exerted himself, in a particular manner, to furnish the army with those supplies which the country afforded. The highest acknowledgments were made to the Count de Rochambeau; and several other French officers were named with distinction. So many disasters had attended the former efforts of the United States to

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thousand five hundred and twenty-seven non-commissioned officers and privates, and one hundred and twenty-four persons belonging to the hospital, commissary, and wagon departments, making in the whole seven thousand and seventy-three prisoners. To this number are to be added six commissioned, and twenty-eight non-commissioned officers and privates made prisoners in the two redoubts which were stormed, and in the sortie made by the garrison.

avail themselves of the succours occasionally afforded by France, that an opinion not very favourable to the alliance appears to have gained some ground in the country, and to have insinuated itself into the army. The Commander-in-chief seized this occasion to discountenance a course of thinking from which he had always feared pernicious consequences, and displayed the great value of the aids lately received, in language highly flattering to the French monarch, as well as to the land and naval forces of that nation.

Knowing the influence which the loss of the army in Virginia must have on the war, Sir Henry Clinton determined to hazard much for its preservation. About seven thousand of his best troops sailed for the Chesapeake, under convoy of a fleet augmented to twenty-five ships of the line. This armament left the Hook the day on which the capitulation was signed at Yorktown, and appeared off the capes of Virginia on the 24th of October. Unquestionable intelligence being there received that Lord Cornwallis had surrendered, the British general returned to New York.

The exultation manifested throughout the United States at the capture of this formidable army was equal to the terror it had inspired. In congress, the intelligence was received with joy proportioned to the magnitude of the event; and the sense of that body on this brilliant achievement was expressed in various resolutions, returning the thanks of the United States to the Commander-in-chief, to the Count de Rochambeau, to the Count de Grasse, to the officers of the allied army generally, and to the corps of artillery, and engineers particularly. In addition to these testimonials of gratitude, it was resolved that a marble column should be erected at Yorktown, in Virginia, with emblems of the alliance between the United States and his most Christian Majesty, and inscribed with a succinct narrative of the surrender of Earl Cornwallis to his Excellency General Washington, the Commander-in-chief of the combined forces of America and France; to his Excellency the Count de Rochambeau, commanding the auxiliary troops of his most Christian Majesty in America and to his Excellency Count de Grasse, commanding in chief the naval army of France in the Chesapeake. Two stand of colours taken in Yorktown were presented to General Washington; two pieces of field ordnance to the Count de Rochambeau; and application was made to his most Christian Majesty, to permit the Admiral to accept a testimonial of their approbation similar to that presented to the Count de Rochambeau. Congress determined to go in solemn procession to the Dutch Lutheran church, to return thanks to Almighty God for crowning the allied arms with success, by the surrender of the whole British army under Lord Cornwallis; and also issued a proclamation, appointing the 13th day of December for general thanksgiving and prayer, on account of this signal interposition of Divine Providence.

It was not by congress only that the public joy at this great event, and the public approbation of the conduct of General Washington were displayed. The most flattering and affectionate addresses of congratulation were presented from every part of the union; and state governments, corporate towns, and learned institutions, vied with each other in the testimonials they gave of their high sense of his important services, and of their attachment to his person and character.

The superiority of the allied force opened a prospect of still farther advantages. The remaining posts of the British in the southern states were too weak to be defended against the army which had triumphed over Lord Cornwallis; and the troops which occupied them could neither escape nor be reinforced, if the Count de Grasse could be prevailed on to co-operate against them. Although, in his first conference, he had explicitly declared his inability to engage in any enterprise to be undertaken subsequent to that against Yorktown,[1] the siege of that place had employed so much less time than the admiral had consented to appropriate to it, that the general resumed his plan of southern operations. In a letter addressed to De Grasse, he used every argument which might operate on his love of fame, or his desire to promote the interests of the allies, to prevail on him to cooperate in an expedition against Charleston. If this object should be unattainable, his attention was next turned to Wilmington, in North Carolina, which was still occupied by a small detachment of British troops who kept that state in check. The capture of this detachment, though not an object of much consequence in itself, was supposed to derive some importance from the influence which the complete liberation of North Carolina might have on the future military operations of the United States, and on their negotiations. General Washington proposed to send a detachment intended to reinforce General Greene, as far as Wilmington, under convoy. The reduction of that place, he supposed, would detain the fleet but a few days, after which it might proceed to the West Indies.

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[1] See note, No. XXI at the end of the volume.

To enforce the representations contained in his letter, as well as to pay his respects to the admiral, and to express in person the high sense entertained of his important services, the Commander-in-chief repaired on board the Ville de Paris. The Count acknowledged his conviction of the advantages to be expected from an expedition against Charleston; but said, that "the orders of his court, ulterior projects, and his engagements with the Spaniards, rendered it impossible for him to remain on the coast during the time which would be required for the operation." As he also declined taking on board the troops designed to reinforce General Greene, preparations were made for their march by land; and Major General St. Clair, who commanded the detachment, was ordered to take Wilmington in his route, and to gain possession of that post.

The Count de Grasse having consented to remain in the bay a few days for the purpose of covering the transportation of the eastern troops, and of the ordnance to the Head of Elk, they were embarked in the beginning of November, under the command of General Lincoln, who was directed to march them into New Jersey and New York, and to canton them for the winter in those states.[1] The French troops remained in Virginia, not only for the protection of that state, but to be in readiness to march southward or northward, as the exigencies of the ensuing campaign might require.

The transportation of the troops and ordnance to the Head of Elk being effected, the Count de Grasse sailed for the West Indies, and the Commander-in-chief proceeded to Philadelphia.

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[1] See note, No. XXII at the end of the volume.

NOTES

NOTE—No. 1

It will not be unacceptable to the reader to peruse this first report of a young gentleman who afterwards performed so distinguished a part in the revolution of his country, it is therefore inserted at large.

I was commissioned and appointed by the Hon. Robert Dinwiddie, Esq. Governor &c. of Virginia, to visit and deliver a letter to the commandant of the French forces on the Ohio, and set out on the intended journey on the same day: the next, I arrived at Fredericksburg, and engaged Mr. Jacob Vanbraam to be my French interpreter, and proceeded with him to Alexandria, where we provided necessaries. From thence we went to Winchester, and got baggage, horses, &c. and from thence we pursued the new road to Wills' Creek, where we arrived the 14th November.

Here I engaged Mr. Gist to pilot us out, and also hired four others as servitors, Barnaby Currin, and John M'Quire, Indian traders, Henry Steward and William Jenkins; and in company with those persons left the inhabitants the next day.

The excessive rains and vast quantity of snow which had fallen, prevented our reaching Mr. Frazier's, an Indian trader, at the mouth of Turtle creek, on Monongahela river, until Thursday the 22d. We were informed here, that expresses had been sent a few days before to the traders down the river, to acquaint them with the French general's death, and the return of the major part of the French army into winter quarters.

The waters were quite impassable without swimming our horses, which obliged us to get the loan of a canoe from Frazier, and to send Barnaby Currin and Henry Steward down the Monongahela, with our baggage, to meet us at the forks of Ohio, about ten miles; there, to cross the Alleghany.

As I got down before the canoe, I spent some time in viewing the rivers, and the land in the fork, which I think extremely well situated for a fort, as it has the absolute command of both rivers. The land at the point is twenty, or twenty-five feet above the common surface of the water; and a considerable bottom of flat, well timbered land all around it very convenient for building. The rivers are each a quarter of a mile or more across, and run here very nearly at right angles; Alleghany, bearing northeast; and Monongahela, southeast. The former of these two is a very rapid and swift running water, the other deep and still, without any perceptible fall.

About two miles from this, on the southeast side of the river, at the place where the Ohio company intended to erect a fort, lives Shingiss, king of the Delawares. We called upon him, to invite him to council at the Loggstown.

As I had taken a good deal of notice yesterday of the situation at the fork, my curiosity led me to examine this more particularly, and I think it greatly inferior, either for defence or advantages; especially the latter. For a fort at the fork would be equally well situated on the Ohio, and have the entire command of the Monongahela, which runs up our settlement, and is extremely well designed for water carriage, as it is of a deep, still nature. Besides, a fort at the fork might be built at much less expense than at the other places.

Nature has well contrived this lower place for water defence; but the hill whereon it must stand being about a quarter of a mile in length, and then descending gradually on the land side, will render it difficult and very expensive to make a sufficient fortification there. The whole flat upon the hill must be taken in, the side next the descent made extremely high, or else the hill itself cut away: otherwise, the enemy may raise batteries within that distance without being exposed to a single shot from the fort.

Shingiss attended us to the Loggstown, where we arrived between sun-setting and dark, the twenty-fifth day after I left Williamsburg. We travelled over some extremely good and bad land to get to this place.

As soon as I came into town, I went to Monakatoocha (as the half king was out at his hunting cabin on Little Beaver creek, about fifteen miles off) and informed him by John Davidson, my Indian interpreter, that I was sent a messenger to the French general; and was ordered to call upon the sachems of the Six Nations to acquaint them with it. I gave him a string of wampum and a twist of tobacco, and desired him to send for the half king, which he promised to do by a runner in the morning, and for other sachems. I invited him and the other great men present, to my tent, where they stayed about an hour and returned.

According to the best observations I could make, Mr. Giff's new settlement (which we passed by) bears about west northwest seventy miles from Wills' creek; Shanapins, or the forks, north by west, or north northwest about fifty miles from that; and from thence to the Loggstown, the course is nearly west about eighteen or twenty miles; so that the whole distance, as we went and computed it, is, at least, one hundred and thirty-five or one hundred and forty miles from our back inhabitants.

25th. Came to town, four of ten Frenchmen, who had deserted from a company at the Kuskuskas, which lies at the mouth of this river. I got the following account from them. They were sent from New Orleans with a hundred men, and eight canoe loads of provisions, to this place, where they expected to have met the same number of men, from the forts on this side of lake Erie, to convoy them and the stores up, who were not arrived when they ran off.

I inquired into the situation of the French on the Mississippi, their numbers, and what forts they had built. They informed me, that there were four small forts between New Orleans and the Black Islands, garrisoned with about thirty or forty men, and a few small pieces in each. That at New Orleans, which is near the mouth of the Mississippi, there are thirty-five companies of forty men each, with a pretty strong fort mounting eight carriage guns; and at the Black Islands there are several companies and a fort with six guns. The Black Islands are about a hundred and thirty leagues above the mouth of the Ohio, which is about three hundred and fifty above New Orleans. They also acquainted me, that there was a small pallisadoed fort on the Ohio, at the mouth of the Obaish, about sixty leagues from the Mississippi. The Obaish heads near the west end of lake Erie, and affords the communication between the French on the Mississippi and those on the lakes. These deserters came up from the lower Shannoah town with one Brown, an Indian trader, and were going to Philadelphia.

About three o'clock this evening the half king came to town. I went up and invited him with Davidson privately, to my tent; and desired him to relate some of the particulars of his journey to the French commandant, and of his reception there; also, to give me an account of the ways and distance. He told me, that the nearest and levelest way was now impassable, by reason of many large miry savannas; that we must be obliged to go by Venango, and should not get to the near fort in less than five or six nights sleep, good travelling. When he went to the fort, he said he was received in a very stern manner by the late commander, who asked him very abruptly, what he had come about, and to declare his business: which he said he did in the following speech:

"Fathers, I am come to tell you your own speeches; what your own mouths have declared. Fathers, you, in former days, set a silver basin before us, wherein there was the leg of a beaver, and desired all the nations to come and eat of it, to eat in peace and plenty, and not to be churlish to one another: and that if any such person should be found to be a disturber, I here lay down by the edge of the dish a rod which you must scourge them with; and if your father should get foolish, in my old days, I desire you may use it upon me as well as others.

"Now, fathers, it is you who are the disturbers in this land, by coming and building your towns; and taking it away unknown to us, and by force.

"Fathers, we kindled a fire a long time ago, at a place called Montreal, where we desired you to stay, and not to come and intrude upon our land. I now desire you may despatch to that place; for be it known to you, fathers, that this is our land and not yours.

"Fathers, I desire you may hear me in civilness; if not, we must handle that rod which was laid down for the use of the obstreperous. If you had come in a peaceable manner, like our brothers the English, we would not have been against your trading with us, as they do; but to come, fathers, and build houses upon our land, and to take it by force, is what we can not submit to.

"Fathers, both you and the English are white, we live in a country between; therefore, the land belongs to neither one nor the other. But the great Being above allowed it to be a place of residence for us; so, fathers, I desire you to withdraw, as I have done our brothers the English; for I will keep you at arm's length. I lay this down as a trial for both, to see which will have the greatest regard to it, and that side we will stand by, and make equal sharers with us. Our brothers, the English, have heard this, and I come now to tell it to you; for I am not afraid to discharge you off this land."

This he said was the substance of what he spoke to the general, who made this reply.

"Now, my child, I have heard your speech; you spoke first, but it is my time to speak now. Where is my wampum that you took away, with the marks of towns in it? This wampum I do not know, which you have discharged me off the land with: but you need not put yourself to the trouble of speaking, for I will not hear you. I am not afraid of flies or mosquitoes, for Indians are such as those: I tell you down that river I will go, and build upon it, according to my command. If the river was blocked up, I have forces sufficient to burst it open, and tread under my feet all that stand in opposition, together with their alliances; for my force is as the sand upon the sea shore: therefore here is your wampum; I sling it at you. Child, you talk foolish; you say this land belongs to you, but there is not the black of my nail yours. I saw that land sooner than you did, before the Shannoahs and you were at war; Lead was the man who went down and took possession of that river. It is my land, and I will have it, let who will stand up for, or say against it. I will buy and sell with the English (mockingly.) If people will be ruled by me, they may expect kindness, but not else."

The half king told me he had inquired of the general after two Englishmen, who were made prisoners, and received this answer:

"Child, you think it a very great hardship that I made prisoners of those two people at Venango. Don't you concern yourself with it: we took and carried them to Canada, to get intelligence of what the English were doing in Virginia."

He informed me that they had built two forts, one on lake Erie, and another on French creek, near a small lake, about fifteen miles asunder, and a large wagon road between. They are both built after the same model, but different in size: that on the lake the largest. He gave me a plan of them of his own drawing.

The Indians inquired very particularly after their brothers in Carolina gaol.

They also asked what sort of a boy it was who was taken from the south branch; for they were told by some Indians, that a party of French Indians had carried a white boy by Kuskuska town, towards the lakes.

26th. We met in council at the long house about nine o'clock, where I spoke to them as follows:

"Brothers, I have called you together in council, by order of your brother the governor of Virginia, to acquaint you, that I am sent with all possible despatch, to visit and deliver a letter to the French commandant, of very great importance to your brothers the English; and I dare say to you, their friends and allies.

"I was desired, brothers, by your brother the governor to call upon you, the sachems of the nations, to inform you of it, and to ask your advice and assistance to proceed the nearest and best road to the French. You see, brothers, I have gotten thus far on my journey.

"His honour likewise desired me to apply to you for some of your young men to conduct and provide provisions for us on our way; and be a safeguard against those French Indians who have taken up the hatchet against us. I have spoken thus particularly to you, brothers, because his honour our governor treats you as good friends and allies, and holds you in great esteem. To confirm what I have said, I give you this string of wampum."

After they had considered for some time on the above discourse, the half king got up and spoke.

"Now, my brother, in regard to what my brother the governor had desired of me, I return you this answer.

"I rely upon you as a brother ought to do, as you say we are brothers, and one people. We shall put heart in hand and speak to our fathers, the French, concerning the speech they made to me; and you may depend that we will endeavour to be your guard.

"Brother, as you have asked my advice, I hope you will be ruled by it, and stay until I can provide a company to go with you. The French speech belt is not here; I have it to go for to my hunting cabin. Likewise, the people whom I have ordered in are not yet come, and can not until the third night from this; until which time, brother, I must beg you to stay.

"I intend to send the guard of Mingos, Shannoahs, and Delawares, that our brothers may see the love and loyalty we bear them."

As I had orders to make all possible despatch, and waiting here was very contrary to my inclination, I thanked him in the most suitable manner I could; and told him that my business required the greatest expedition, and would not admit of that delay. He was not well pleased that I should offer to go before the time he had appointed, and told me, that he could not consent to our going without a guard, for fear some accident should befall us, and draw a reflection upon him. Besides, said he, this is a matter of no small moment, and must not be entered into without due consideration; for I intend to deliver up the French speech belt, and make the Shannoahs and Delawares do the same. And accordingly he gave orders to king Shingiss, who was present, to attend on Wednesday night with the wampum; and two men of their nation to be in readiness to set out with us next morning. As I found it was impossible to get off without affronting them in the most egregious manner, I consented to stay.

I gave them back a string of wampum which I met with at Mr. Frazier's, and which they sent with a speech to his honour the governor, to inform him, that three nations of French Indians, viz. Chippoways, Ottoways, and Orundaks, had taken up the hatchet against the English; and desired them to repeat it over again. But this they postponed doing until they met in full council with the Shannoah and Delaware chiefs.

27th. Runners were despatched very early for the Shannoah chiefs. The half king set out himself to fetch the French speech belt from his hunting cabin.

28th. He returned this evening, and came with Monakatoocha, and two other sachems to my tent; and begged (as they had complied with his honour the governor's request, in providing men, &c.) to know on what business we were going to the French? This was a question I had all along expected, and had provided as satisfactory answers to as I could; which allayed their curiosity a little.

Monakatoocha informed me, that an Indian from Venango brought news, a few days ago, that the French had called all the Mingos, Delawares, &c. together at that place; and told them that they intended to have been down the river this fall, but the waters were growing cold, and the winter advancing, which obliged them to go into quarters; but that they might assuredly expect them in the spring, with a far greater number; and desired that they might be quite passive, and not intermeddle unless they had a mind to draw all their force upon them: for that they expected to fight the English three years (as they supposed there would be some attempts made to stop them) in which time they should conquer. But that if they should prove equally strong, they and the English would join to cut them all off, and divide the land between them: that though they had lost their general, and some few of their soldiers, yet there were men enough to reinforce them, and make them masters of the Ohio.

This speech, he said, was delivered to them by one Captain Joncaire, their interpreter in chief, living at Venango, and a man of note in the army.

29th. The half king and Monakatoocha, came very early and begged me to stay one day more: for notwithstanding they had used all the diligence in their power, the Shannoah chiefs had not brought the wampum they ordered, but would certainly be in to night; if not, they would delay me no longer, but would send it after us as soon as they arrived. When I found them so pressing in their request, and knew that returning of wampum was the abolishing of agreements; and giving this up was shaking off all dependence upon the French, I consented to stay, as I believed an offence offered at this crisis, might be attended with greater ill consequence, than another day's delay. They also informed me, that Shingiss could not get in his men; and was prevented from coming himself by his wife's sickness; (I believe, by fear of the French) but that the wampum of that nation was lodged with Kustalogo, one of their chiefs, at Venango.

In the evening, late, they came again, and acquainted me that the Shannoahs were not yet arrived, but that it should not retard the prosecution of our journey. He delivered in my hearing the speech that was to be made to the French by Jeskakake, one of their old chiefs, which was giving up the belt the late commandant had asked for and repeating nearly the same speech he himself had done before.

He also delivered a string of wampum to this chief, which was sent by king Shingiss, to be given to Kustalogo, with orders to repair to the French, and deliver up the wampum.

He likewise gave a very large string of black and white wampum, which was to be sent up immediately to the Six Nations, if the French refused to quit the land at this warning; which was the third and last time, and was the right of this Jeskakake to deliver.

30th. Last night, the great men assembled at their council house, to consult further about this journey, and who were to go: the result of which was, that only three of their chiefs, with one of their best hunters, should be our convoy. The reason they gave for not sending more, after what had been proposed at council the 26th, was, that a greater number might give the French suspicions of some bad design, and cause them to be treated rudely: but I rather think they could not get their hunters in.

We set out about nine o'clock with the half king, Jeskakake, White Thunder, and the Hunter; and travelled on the road to Venango, where we arrived the fourth of December, without any thing remarkable happening but a continued series of bad weather.

This is an old Indian town, situated at the mouth of French creek, on Ohio; and lies near north about sixty miles from the Loggstown, but more than seventy the way we were obliged to go.

We found the French colours hoisted at a house from which they had driven Mr. John Frazier, an English subject. I immediately repaired to it, to know where the commander resided. There were three officers, one of whom, Captain Joncaire, informed me that he had the command of the Ohio; but that there was a general officer at the near fort, where he advised me to apply for an answer. He invited us to sup with them, and treated us with the greatest complaisance.

The wine, as they dosed themselves pretty plentifully with it, soon banished the restraint which at first appeared in their conversation, and gave a license to their tongues to reveal their sentiments more freely.

They told me, that it was their absolute design to take possession of the Ohio, and by G**d they would do it: for that, although they were sensible the English could raise two men for their one, yet they knew their motions were too slow and dilatory to prevent any undertaking of theirs. They pretend to have an undoubted right to the river from a discovery made by one La Salle, sixty years ago: and the rise of this expedition is, to prevent our settling on the river or waters of it, as they heard of some families moving out in order thereto. From the best intelligence I could get, there have been fifteen hundred men on this side Ontario lake. But upon the death of the general, all were recalled to about six or seven nundred, who were left to garrison four forts, one hundred and fifty or thereabout in each. The first of them is on French creek, near a small lake, about sixty miles from Venango, near north northwest: the next lies on lake Erie, where the greater part of their stores are kept, about fifteen miles from the other: from this it is one hundred and twenty miles to the carrying place, at the falls of lake Erie, where there is a small fort, at which they lodge their goods in bringing them from Montreal, the place from whence all their stores are brought. The next fort lies about twenty miles from this, on Ontario lake. Between his fort and Montreal, there are three others, the first of which is nearly opposite to the English fort Oswego. From the fort on lake Erie to Montreal is about six hundred miles, which, they say, requires no more (if good weather,) than four weeks voyage if they go in barks or large vessels, so that they may cross the lake: but if they come in canoes, it will requires five or six weeks, for they are obliged to keep under the shore.

5th. Rained excessively all day, which prevented our travelling. Captain Joncaire sent for the half king, as he had but just heard that he came with me. He affected to be much concerned that I did not make free to bring them in before. I excused it in the best manner of which I was capable, and told him, I did not think their company agreeable, as I had heard him say a good deal in dispraise of Indians in general: but another motive prevented me from bringing them into his company: I knew that he was an interpreter, and a person of very great influence among the Indians, and had lately used all possible means to draw them over to his interest; therefore, I was desirous of giving him no opportunity that could be avoided.

When they came in, there was great pleasure expressed at seeing them. He wondered how they could be so near without coming to visit him, made several trifling presents, and applied liquor so fast, that they were soon rendered incapable of the business they came about, notwithstanding the caution which was given.

6th. The half king came to my tent, quite sober, and insisted very much that I should stay and hear what he had to say to the French. I fain would have prevented him from speaking any thing until he came to the commandant, but could not prevail. He told me, that at this place a council fire was kindled, where all their business with these people was to be transacted, and that the management of the Indian affairs was left solely to Monsieur Joncaire. As I was desirous of knowing the issue of this, I agreed to stay; but sent our horses a little way up French creek, to raft over and encamp; which I knew would make it near night.

About ten o'clock, they met in council. The king spoke much the same as he had before done to the general; and offered the French speech belt which had before been demanded, with the marks of four towns on it, which Monsieur Joncaire refused to receive, but desired him to carry it to the fort to the commander.

7th. Monsieur La Force, Commissary of the French stores, and three other soldiers, came over to accompany us up. We found it extremely difficult to get the Indians off to-day, as every stratagem had been used to prevent their going up with me. I had last night left John Davidson (the Indian interpreter) whom I brought with me from town, and strictly charged him not to be out of their company, as I could not get them over to my tent; for they had some business with Kustologa, chiefly to know why he did not deliver up the French speech belt which he had in keeping: but I was obliged to send Mr. Gist over to-day to fetch them, which he did with great persuasion.

At twelve o'clock, we set out for the fort, and were prevented from arriving there until the eleventh by excessive rains, snows, and bad travelling through many mires and swamps; these we were obliged to pass to avoid crossing the creek, which was impossible, either by fording or rafting, the water was so high and rapid.

We passed over much good land since we left Venango, and through several extensive and very rich meadows, one of which, I believe, was nearly four miles in length, and considerably wide in some places.

12th. I prepared early to wait upon the commander, and was received, and conducted to him by the second officer in command. I acquainted him with my business, and offered my commission and letter: both of which he desired me to keep until the arrival of Monsieur Reparti, captain at the next fort, who was sent for and expected every hour.

This commander is a knight of the military order of St. Louis, and named Legardeur de St. Pierre. He is an elderly gentleman, and has much the air of a soldier. He was sent over to take the command, immediately upon the death of the late general, and arrived here about seven days before me.

At two o'clock, the gentleman who was sent for arrived, when I offered the letter, &c. again, which they received, and adjourned into a private apartment for the captain to translate, who understood a little English. After he had done it, the commander desired I would walk in and bring my interpreter to peruse and correct it: which I did.

13th. The chief officers retired to hold a council of war, which gave me an opportunity of taking the dimensions of the fort, and making what observations I could.

It is situated on the south, or west fork of French creek, near the water; and is almost surrounded by the creek, and a small branch of it which forms a kind of island. Four houses compose the sides. The bastions are made of piles driven into the ground, standing more than twelve feet above it, and sharp at top; with port holes cut for cannon, and loop holes for the small arms to fire through. There are eight six pound pieces mounted in each bastion, and one piece of four pound before the gate. In the bastions are a guard house, chapel, doctor's lodging, and the commander's private store: round which are laid platforms for the cannon and men to stand on. There are several barracks without the fort, for the soldiers' dwelling, covered, some with bark, and some with boards, made chiefly of logs. There are also several other houses, such as stables, smith's shop, &c.

I could get no certain account of the number of men here; but according to the best judgment I could form, there are an hundred, exclusive of officers, of which there are many. I also gave orders to the people who were with me, to take an exact account of the canoes which were hauled up to convey their forces down in the spring. This they did, and told fifty of birch bark, and an hundred and seventy of pine; besides many others which were blocked out, in readiness for being made.

14th. As the snow increased very fast, and our horses daily became weaker, I sent them off unloaded, under the care of Barnaby Currin and two others, to make all convenient despatch to Venango, and there to wait our arrival, if there was a prospect of the river's freezing: if not, then to continue down to Shanapin's town, at the forks of Ohio, and there to wait until we came to cross the Alleghany; intending myself to go down by water, as I had the offer of a canoe or two.

As I found many plots concerted to retard the Indians' business, and prevent their returning with me, I endeavoured all that lay in my power to frustrate their schemes, and hurried them on to execute their intended design. They accordingly pressed for admittance this evening, which at length was granted them, privately, to the commander and one or two other officers. The half king told me that he offered the wampum to the commander, who evaded taking it, and made many fair promises of love and friendship; said he wanted to live in peace and trade amicably with them, as a proof of which, he would send some goods immediately down to the Loggstown for them. But I rather think the design of that is to bring away all our straggling traders they meet with, as I privately understood they intended to carry an officer, &c. with them. And what rather confirms this opinion, I was inquiring of the commander by what authority he had made prisoners of several of our English subjects. He told me that the country belonged to them; that no Englishman had a right to trade upon those waters; and that he had orders to make every person prisoner who attempted it on the Ohio, or the waters of it.

I inquired of Captain Reparti about the boy that was carried by this place, as it was done while the command devolved on him, between the death of the late general, and the arrival of the present. He acknowledged that a boy had been carried past: and that the Indians had two or three white men's scalps, (I was told by some of the Indians at Venango, eight) but pretended to have forgotten the name of the place where the boy came from, and all the particular facts, though he had questioned him for some hours, as they were carrying past. I likewise inquired what they had done with John Trotter and James M'Clocklan, two Pennsylvania traders, whom they had taken with all their goods. They told me that they had been sent to Canada, but were now returned home.

This evening, I received an answer to his honour the governor's letter, from the commandant.

15th. The commandant ordered a plentiful store of liquor, provision, &c. to be put on board our canoes, and appeared to be extremely complaisant, though he was exerting every artifice which he could invent to set our Indians at variance with us, to prevent their going until after our departure: presents, rewards, and every thing which could be suggested by him or his officers. I can not say that ever in my life I suffered so much anxiety as I did in this affair. I saw that every stratagem, which the most fruitful brain could invent, was practised to win the half king to their interest; and that leaving him there was giving them the opportunity they aimed at. I went to the half king and pressed him in the strongest terms to go; he told me that the commandant would not discharge him until the morning. I then went to the commandant, and desired him to do their business, and complained of ill treatment; for keeping them, as they were part of my company, was detaining me. This he promised not to do, but to forward my journey as much as he could. He protested he did not keep them, but was ignorant of the cause of their stay; though I soon found it out. He had promised them a present of guns, &c. if they would wait until the morning. As I was very much pressed by the Indians to wait this day for them, I consented, on a promise that nothing should hinder them in the morning.

16th. The French were not slack in their inventions to keep the Indians this day also. But as they were obliged, according to promise, to give the present, they then endeavoured to try the power of liquor, which I doubt not would have prevailed at any other time than this: but I urged and insisted with the king so closely upon his word, that he refrained, and set off with us as he had engaged.

We had a tedious and very fatiguing passage down the creek. Several times we had like to have been staved against rocks; and many times were obliged all hands to get out and remain in the water half an hour or more, getting over the shoals. At one place, the ice had lodged, and made it impassable by water; we were, therefore, obliged to carry our canoe across the neck of land, a quarter of a mile over. We did not reach Venango until the 22d, where we met with our horses.

This creek is extremely crooked. I dare say the distance between the fort and Venango, can not be less than one hundred and thirty miles if it is measured to follow the meanders.

23d. When I got things ready to set off, I sent for the half king, to know whether he intended to go with us, or by water. He told me that White Thunder had hurt himself much, and was sick, and unable to walk; therefore he was obliged to carry him down in a canoe. As I found he intended to stay here a day or two, and knew that Monsieur Joncaire would employ every scheme to set him against the English, as he had before done, I told him, I hoped he would guard against his flattery, and let no fine speeches influence him in their favour. He desired I might not be concerned, for he knew the French too well, for any thing to engage him in their favour; and that though he could not go down with us, he yet would endeavour to meet at the forks with Joseph Campbell, to deliver a speech for me to carry to his honour the governor. He told me he would order the Young Hunter to attend us, and get provisions, &c. if wanted.

Our horses were now so weak and feeble, and the baggage so heavy, (as we were obliged to provide all the necessaries which the journey would require) that we doubted much their performing it. Therefore, myself and others, except the drivers, who were obliged to ride, gave up our horses for packs, to assist along with the baggage. I put myself in an Indian walking dress, and continued with them three days, until I found there was no probability of their getting home in any reasonable time. The horses became less able to travel every day; the cold increased very fast; and the roads were becoming much worse by a deep snow, continually freezing; therefore, as I was uneasy to get back, to make report of my proceedings to his honour the governor, I determined to prosecute my journey, the nearest way through the woods, on foot.

Accordingly, I left Mr. Vanbraam in charge of our baggage, with money and directions to provide necessaries from place to place for themselves and horses, and to make the most convenient despatch in travelling.

I took my necessary papers, pulled off my clothes, and tied myself up in a watch coat. Then, with gun in hand, and pack on my back, in which were my papers and provisions, I set out with Mr. Gist, fitted in the same manner, on Wednesday the 26th. The day following, just after we had passed a place called Murdering town, (where we intended to quit the path and steer across the country for Shanapin's town) we fell in with a party of French Indians, who had laid in wait for us. One of them fired at Mr. Gist or me, not fifteen steps off, but fortunately missed. We took this fellow into custody, and kept him until about nine o'clock at night, then let him go, and walked all the remaining part of the night without making any stop, that we might get the start, so far, as to be out of the reach of their pursuit the next day, since we were well assured they would follow our track as soon as it was light. The next day we continued travelling until quite dark, and got to the river about two miles above Shanapins. We expected to have found the river frozen, but it was not, only about fifty yards from each shore. The ice, I suppose, had broken up above, for it was driving in vast quantities.

There was no way for getting over but on a raft, which we set about, with but one poor hatchet, and finished just after sun setting. This was a whole day's work: we next got it launched, then went on board of it, and set off; but before we were half way over, we were jammed in the ice, in such a manner, that we expected every moment our raft to sink, and ourselves to perish. I put out my setting pole to try to stop the raft, that the ice might pass by, when the rapidity of the stream threw it with so much violence against the pole, that it jerked me out into ten feet water; but I fortunately saved myself by catching hold of one of the raft logs. Notwithstanding all our efforts, we could not get to either shore, but were obliged, as we were near an island, to quit our raft and make to it.

The cold was so extremely severe, that Mr. Gist had all his fingers, and some of his toes frozen, and the water was shut up so hard, that we found no difficulty in getting off the island on the ice in the morning, and went to Mr. Frazier's. We met here with twenty warriors, who were going to the southward to war; but coming to a place on the head of the great Kanawa, where they found seven people killed and scalped, (all but one woman with very light hair) they turned about and ran back, for fear the inhabitants should rise and take them as the authors of the murder. They report that the bodies were lying about the house, and some of them much torn and eaten by the hogs. By the marks which were left, they say they were French Indians of the Ottoway nation, &c. who did it.

As we intended to take horses here, and it required some time to find them, I went up about three miles to the mouth of Yohogany, to visit queen Alliquippa, who had expressed great concern that we passed her in going to the fort. I made her a present of a watch coat and a bottle of rum, which latter was thought much the best present of the two.

Tuesday, the first of January, we left Mr. Frazier's house, and arrived at Mr. Gist's, at Monongahela, the second, where I bought a horse, saddle, &c. The sixth, we met seventeen horses loaded with materials and stores for a fort at the forks of Ohio, and the day after, some families going out to settle. This day, we arrived at Wills' creek, after as fatiguing a journey as it is possible to conceive, rendered so by excessive bad weather. From the first day of December to the fifteenth, there was but one day on which it did not rain or snow incessantly; and throughout the whole journey, we met with nothing but one continued series of cold, wet weather, which occasioned very uncomfortable lodgings, especially after we had quitted our tent, which was some screen from the inclemency of it.

On the 11th, I got to Belvoir, where I stopped one day to take necessary rest; and then set out and arrived in Williamsburg the 16th, when I waited upon his honour the governor, with the letter I had brought from the French commandant, and to give an account of the success of my proceedings. This I beg leave to do by offering the foregoing narrative, as it contains the most remarkable occurrences which happened in my journey.

I hope what has been said will be sufficient to make your honour satisfied with my conduct; for that was my aim in undertaking the journey, and chief study throughout the prosecution of it.

NOTE—No. II

The author is indebted, for the letter alluded to, to the Editor of the Lancaster Journal.

Sir,—I am really sorry that I have it not in my power to answer your request, in a more satisfactory manner. If you had favoured me with the journal a few days sooner, I would have examined it carefully, and endeavoured to point out such errors as might conduce to your use, my advantage, and the public satisfaction; but now it is out of my power.

I had no time to make any remarks upon that piece which is called my journal. The enclosed are observations on the French notes. They are of no use to me separated, nor will they, I believe, be of any to you; yet I send them unconnected and incoherent as they were taken, for I have no opportunity to correct them.

In regard to the journal, I can only observe in general, that I kept no regular one during that expedition: rough minutes of occurrences I certainly took, and find them as certainly and strangely metamorphosed—some parts left out which I remember were entered, and many things added that never were thought of; the names of men and things egregiously miscalled; and the whole of what I saw Englished, is very incorrect and nonsensical:—yet, I will not pretend to say that the little body who brought it to me, has not made a literal translation, and a good one.

Short as my time is, I can not help remarking on Villiers' account of the battle of, and transactions at the Meadows, as it is very extraordinary, and not less erroneous than inconsistent. He says the French received the first fire. It is well known that we received it at six hundred paces distance. He also says, our fears obliged us to retreat in the most disorderly manner after the capitulation. How is this consistent with his other account? He acknowledges that we sustained the attack, warmly, from ten in the morning until dark, and that he called first to parley, which strongly indicates that we were not totally absorbed in fear. If the gentleman in his account had adhered to the truth, he must have confessed, that we looked upon his offer to parley as an artifice to get into and examine our trenches, and refused on this account, until they desired an officer might be sent to them, and gave their parole for his safe return. He might also, if he had been as great a lover of the truth as he was of vain glory, have said, that we absolutely refused their first and second proposals, and would consent to capitulate on no other terms than such as we obtained. That we were wilfully, or ignorantly deceived by our interpreter in regard to the word *assassination,* I do aver, and will to my dying moment; so will every officer that was present. The interpreter was a Dutchman, little acquainted with the English tongue, therefore might not advert to the tone and meaning of the word in English; but, whatever his motives were for so doing, certain it is, he called it the *death,* or the *loss* of the Sieur Jumonville. So we received and so we understood it, until to our great surprise and mortification, we found it otherwise in a literal translation. That we left our baggage and horses at the Meadows is certain; that there was not even a possibility to bring them away is equally certain, as we had every horse belonging to the camp killed or taken away during the action; so that it was impracticable to bring any thing off that our shoulders were not able to bear, and to wait there was impossible, for we had scarce three days provisions, and were seventy miles from a supply; yet, to say we came off precipitately is absolutely false; notwithstanding they did, contrary to articles, suffer their Indians to pillage our baggage, and commit all kinds of irregularity, we were with them until ten o'clock the next day; we destroyed our powder and other stores, nay, even our private baggage, to prevent its falling into their hands, as we could not bring it off. When we had got about a mile from the place of action, we missed two or three of the wounded, and sent a party back to bring them up—

this is the party he speaks of. We brought them all safe off, and encamped within three miles of the Meadows. These are circumstances, I think, that make it evidently clear, that we were not very apprehensive of danger. The colours he speaks of to be left, was a large flag of immense size and weight; our regimental colours were brought off and are now in my possession. Their gasconades, and boasted clemency, must appear in the most ludicrous light to every considerate person who reads Villiers' journal;—such preparations for an attack, such vigour and intrepidity as he pretends to have conducted his march with, such revenge, as by his own account, appeared in his attack, considered, it will hardly be thought that compassion was his motive for calling a parley. But to sum up the whole, Mr. Villiers pays himself no great compliment, in saying, we were struck with a panic when matters were adjusted. We surely could not be afraid without cause, and if we had cause after capitulation, it was a reflection upon himself.

I do not doubt, but your good nature will excuse the badness of my paper, and the incoherence of my writing—think you see me in a public house in a crowd, surrounded with noise, and you hit my case. You do me particular honour in offering your friendship: I wish I may be so happy as always to merit it, and deserve your correspondence, which I should be glad to cultivate.

NOTE—No. III

Sir,—We your most obedient and affectionate officers, beg leave to express our great concern, at the disagreeable news we have received of your determination to resign the command of that corps, in which we have under you long served.

The happiness we have enjoyed, and the honour we have acquired together, with the mutual regard that has always subsisted between you and your officers, have implanted so sensible an affection in the minds of us all, that we can not be silent on this critical occasion.

In our earliest infancy you took us under your tuition, trained us up in the practice of that discipline, which alone can constitute good troops, from the punctual observance of which you never suffered the least deviation.

Your steady adherence to impartial justice, your quick discernment, and invariable regard to merit, wisely intended to inculcate those genuine sentiments of true honour and passion for glory, from which the greatest military achievements have been derived, first heightened our natural emulation and our desire to excel. How much we improved by those regulations and your own example, with what alacrity we have hitherto discharged our duty, with what cheerfulness we have encountered the severest toils, especially while under your particular directions, we submit to yourself, and flatter ourselves that we have in a great measure answered your expectations.

Judge, then, how sensibly we must be affected with the loss of such an excellent commander, such a sincere friend, and so affable a companion. How rare is it to find those amiable qualifications blended together in one man! How great the loss of such a man! Adieu to that superiority, which the enemy have granted us over other troops, and which even the regulars and provincials have done us the honour publicly to acknowledge! Adieu to that strict discipline and order, which you have always maintained! Adieu to that happy union and harmony, which have been our principal cement!

It gives us additional sorrow, when we reflect, to find our unhappy country will receive a loss no less irreparable than our own. Where will it meet a man so experienced in military affairs—one so renowned for patriotism, conduct, and courage? Who has so great a knowledge of the enemy we have to deal with?—who so well acquainted with their situation and strength?—who so much respected by the soldiery?—who, in short, so able to support the military character of Virginia?

Your approved love to your king and country, and your uncommon perseverance in promoting the honour and true interest of the service, convince us that the most cogent reasons only could induce you to quit it; yet we, with the greatest deference presume to intreat you to suspend those thoughts for another year, and to lead us on to assist in the glorious work of extirpating our enemies, towards which, so considerable advances have been already made. In you, we place the most implicit confidence. Your presence only will cause a steady firmness and vigour to actuate in every breast despising the greatest dangers, and thinking light of toils and hardships, while led on by the man we know and love.

But if we must be so unhappy as to part, if the exigencies of your affairs force you to abandon us, we beg it as our last request, that you will recommend some person most capable to command, whose military knowledge, whose honour, whose conduct, and whose disinterested principles, we may depend on.

Frankness, sincerity, and a certain openness of soul, are the true characteristics of an officer, and we flatter ourselves that you do not think us capable of saying any thing contrary to the purest dictates of our minds. Fully persuaded of this, we beg leave to assure you, that, as you have hitherto been the actuating soul of our whole corps, we shall at all times pay the most invariable regard to your will and pleasure, and will always be happy to demonstrate by our actions with how much respect and esteem we are, &c.

NOTE—No. IV

The delegates of the United Colonies of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the counties of Newcastle, Kent and Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina:

To George Washington, esquire.

We, reposing special trust and confidence in your patriotism, valour, conduct, and fidelity, do, by these presents constitute and appoint you to be general and commander-in-chief of the army of the United Colonies, and of all the forces now raised, or to be raised by them, and of all others who shall voluntarily offer their service, and join the said army for the defence of American liberty, and for repelling every hostile invasion thereof: and you are hereby invested with full power and authority to act as you shall think for the good and welfare of the service.

And we do hereby strictly charge and require all officers and soldiers under your command, to be obedient to your orders, and diligent in the exercise of their several duties.

And we also enjoin and require you to be careful in executing the great trust reposed in you, by causing strict discipline and order to be observed in the army, and that the soldiers be duly exercised and provided with all convenient necessaries.

And you are to regulate your conduct in every respect by the rules and discipline of war, (as herewith given you) and punctually to observe and follow such orders and directions from time to time as you shall receive from this or a future congress of these United Colonies, or committee of congress.

This commission to continue in force, until revoked by us, or a future congress.

NOTE—No. V

This letter is so truly characteristic of the writer, and treats in a manner so peculiar to himself, the measures of congress on this subject, that, although it may not be immediately connected with the Life of General Washington, the reader will not be displeased with its insertion.

Stamford, January 22, 1779.

Sir,—As General Washington has informed the congress of his motives for detaching me, it is needless to trouble you upon the subject. I am therefore only to inform you that I have collected a body of about twelve hundred men from the colony of

Connecticut, whose zeal and ardour demonstrated on this occasion can not be sufficiently praised. With this body I am marching directly to New York to execute the different purposes for which I am detached. I am sensible, sir, that nothing can carry the air of greater presumption than a servant intruding his opinion unasked upon his master, but at the same time there are certain seasons when the real danger of the master may not only excuse, but render laudable, the servant's officiousness. I therefore flatter myself that the congress will receive with indulgence and lenity the opinion I shall offer. The scheme of simply disarming the tories seems to me totally ineffectual; it will only embitter their minds and add virus to their venom. They can, and will, always be supplied with fresh arms by the enemy. That of seizing the most dangerous will, I apprehend, from the vagueness of the instruction, be attended with some bad consequences, and can answer no good one. It opens so wide a door for partiality and prejudice to the different congresses and committees on the continent, that much discord and animosity will probably ensue; it being next to impossible to distinguish who are, and who are not the most dangerous. The plan of explaining to these deluded people the justice and merits of the American cause is certainly generous and humane, but I am afraid, will be fruitless. They are so rivited in their opinions, that I am persuaded should an angel descend from heaven with his golden trumpet, and ring in their ears that their conduct was criminal, he would be disregarded. I had lately myself an instance of their infatuation which, if it is not impertinent, I will relate. At Newport I took the liberty, without any authority but the conviction of necessity, to administer a very strong oath to some of the leading tories, for which liberty I humbly ask pardon of the congress. One article of this oath was to take arms in defence of their country, if called upon by the voice of the congress. To this Colonel Wanton and others flatly refused their assent; to take arms against their sovereign, they said, was too monstrous an impiety. I asked them if they had lived at the time of the revolution whether they would have been revolutionists—their answers were at first evasive, circuitous, and unintelligible, but, by fixing them down precisely to the question, I at length drew from them a positive confession that no violence, no provocation on the part of the court, could prevail upon them to act with the continent. Such, I am afraid, is the creed and principles of the whole party great and small.—Sense, reason, argument, and eloquence, have been expended in vain; and in vain you may still argue and reason to the end of time. Even the common feelings and resentments of humanity have not aroused them, but rather with a malignant pleasure they have beheld the destruction of their fellow-citizens and relations. But I am running into declamation, perhaps impertinent and presuming, when I ought to confine myself to the scheme I submit to your consideration. It is, sir, in the first place, to disarm all the manifestly disaffected, as well of the lower as the higher class, not on the principle of putting them in a state of impotence (for this I observed before will not be the case) but to supply our troops with arms of which they stand in too great need. Secondly, to appraise their estates and oblige them to deposite at least the value of one half of their respective property in the hands of the continental congress as a security for their good behaviour. And lastly, to administer the strongest oath that can be devised to act offensively and defensively in support of the common rights. I confess that men so eaten up with bigotry, as the bulk of them appear to be, will not consider themselves as bound by this oath; particularly as it is in some measure forced, they will argue that it is by no means obligatory; but if I mistake not, it will be a sort of criterion by which you will be able to distinguish the desperate fanatics from those who are reclaimable. The former must of course be secured and carried to some interior parts of the continent where they can not be dangerous. This mode of proceeding I conceive (if any can) will be effectual—but whether it meets with the approbation or disapprobation of the congress, I most humbly conjure them not to attribute the proposal to arrogance, or self-conceit, or pragmatical officiousness, but, at worst, to an intemperate zeal for the public service.

Notwithstanding the apparent slimness of the authority, as I am myself convinced that it is substantial, I think it my duty to communicate a circumstance to congress. I have with me here, sir, a deserter from Captain Wallace's ship before Newport. It is necessary to inform you that this Captain Wallace has the reputation of being the most imprudent and rash of all mortals—particularly when he is heated with wine, which, as reported, is a daily incident: that in these moments he blabs his most secret instructions even to the common men. This deserter, then, informs us that the captain a few days ago assembled the sailors and marines on the quarter-deck, and assured them, by way of encouragement, that they were to proceed very soon to New York where they were to be joined by his majesty's most loyal subjects of White Plains, Poughkeepsie, and Long Island, and at the same time bestowed abundantly his curses on the admiral and general for their dilatoriness and scandalous conduct in not availing themselves sooner of the invitation they had received from the worthy gentlemen. The congress will make what comments they please on this information, which I must repeat I thought it my duty to communicate. Upon the whole, sir, you may be assured that it is the intention of the ministerialists to take possession, and immediately, of New York. The intercepted letters, the unguarded expressions of their officers, in their interviews with ours on the lines, but above all the manifest advantages resulting to their cause from this measure, put their intention beyond dispute. With submission therefore to the wisdom of the congress, it behooves them, I should think, not to lose a moment in securing this important post, which, if in the hands of the enemy, must cut the continent in twain, and render it almost impossible for the northern and southern colonies to support each other. This crisis, when every thing is at stake, is not a time to be over complacent to the timidity of the inhabitants of any particular spot. I have now under my command a respectable force adequate to the purpose of securing the place, and purging all its environs of traitors, on which subject I shall expect with impatience the determination of the congress. Their orders I hope to receive before or immediately on my arrival.

This instant, the enclosed, express from the provincial congress of New York, was delivered into my hands, but as these gentlemen probably are not fully apprised of the danger hanging over their heads, as I have received intelligence from the camp that the fleet is sailed, and that it is necessary to urge my march, I shall proceed with one division of the forces under my command to that city. A moment's delay may be fatal. The force I shall carry with me is not strong enough to act offensively, but just sufficient to secure the city against any immediate designs of the enemy. If this is to give umbrage, if the governor and captain of the man of war are pleased to construe this step as an act of positive hostility, if they are to prescribe what number of your troops are and what number are not to enter the city, all I can say is that New York must be considered as the minister's place, and not the continent. I must now, sir, beg pardon for the length of this letter, and more so, for the presumption in offering so freely my thoughts to the congress, from whom it is my duty simply to receive my orders, and as a servant and soldier strictly to obey; which none can do with greater ardour and affection than,

Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,
CHARLES LEE.

To the honourable John Hancock, esquire, president of the continental congress.

NOTE—No. VI

THE NAMES OF THE MEMBERS WHO SUBSCRIBED THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE WERE AS FOLLOWS, VIZ:

New Hampshire.

Josiah Bartlett,
William Whipple,
Matthew Thornton,

Massachusetts Bay.

Samuel Adams,
John Adams,
Robert Treat Paine,
Elbridge Gerry,

Stephen Hopkins,

Roger Sherman,
Samuel Huntington,

William Floyd,
Philip Livingston,

Richard Stockton,
John Witherspoon,
Francis Hopkinson,

Robert Morris,
Benjamin Rush,
Benjamin Franklin,
John Morton,
George Clymer,

Cesar Rodney,
Thomas M'Kean,

Samuel Chase,
William Paca,

George Wythe,
Richard Henry Lee,
Thomas Jefferson
Benjamin Harrison,

William Hooper,
Joseph Hughes,

Edward Rutledge,
Thomas Heyward, jun.

Button Gwinnett,
George Walton,

Rhode Island, &c.
William Ellery.

Connecticut.
William Williams,
Oliver Wolcott.

New York.
Francis Lewis,
Lewis Morris.

New Jersey.
John Hart,
Abram Clark.

Pennsylvania.
James Smith,
George Taylor,
James Wilson,
George Ross.

Delaware.
George Reed.

Maryland.
Thomas Stone,
Charles Carroll, *of Carrollton.*

Virginia.
Thomas Nelson, jun.
Francis Lightfoot Lee,
Carter Braxton.

North Carolina.
John Penn.

South Carolina.
Thomas Lynch, jun.
Arthur Middleton.

Georgia.
Lyman Hall.

The people of the United States have taken such universal interest in the composition of this celebrated instrument as to excuse a more minute attention to it than has been bestowed on the other contemporaneous state papers.

Mr. Jefferson has preserved a copy of the original draft as reported by the committee, with the amendments made to it in congress, which has been published in his correspondence. The following is extracted from that work.

Mr. Jefferson's draft as reported by the committee	*As amended by congress*
A declaration by the representatives of the United States of America in *general* congress assembled.	A declaration by the representatives of the United States of America in congress assembled.
When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the	Not altered.

laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with *inherent and* inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organising its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations *begun at a distinguished period and* pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferings of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to *expunge* their former system of government. The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of *unremitting* injuries and usurpations *among which appears no solitary fact to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest, but all have* in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this let facts be submitted to a candid world, *for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet unsullied by falsehood.*

He has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with *certain* inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organising its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to *alter* their former systems of government. The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of *repeated* injuries and usurpations, *all having* in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this let facts be submitted to a candid world.

Not altered.

Not altered.

till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended he has utterly neglected to attend to them.	
He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.	Not altered.
He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depositary of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.	Not altered.
He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly *and continually,* for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.	He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.
He has refused for a long time after such dissolutions to cause others to be elected, whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise, the state remaining, in the mean time, exposed to the dangers of invasion from without and convulsions within.	Not altered.
He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for the naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.	Not altered.
He has *suffered* the administration of justice *totally to cease in some of these states,* refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.	He has *obstructed* the administration of justice *by* refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.
He has made *our* judges dependent on his will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.	He has made judges dependent on his will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.
He has erected a multitude of new offices, *by a self-assumed power,* and sent hither swarms of new officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.	He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of new officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.
He has kept among us in times of peace standing armies *and ships of war* without the consent of our legislatures.	He has kept among us in times of peace standing armies without the consent of our legislatures.
He has affected to render the military independent of and superior to the civil power.	Not altered.
He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; for protecting by	He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; for

a mock trial from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states; for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world; for imposing taxes on us without our consent; for depriving us of the benefits of trial by jury; for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences; for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighbouring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these *states;* for taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments; for suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.	protecting by a mock trial from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states; for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world; for imposing taxes on us without our consent; for depriving us *in many cases* of the benefits of trial by jury; for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences; for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighbouring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these *colonies;* for taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments; for suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.
He has abdicated government here, *withdrawing his governors and declaring us out of his allegiance and protection.*	He has abdicated government here *by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.*
He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns and destroyed the lives of our people.	Not altered.
He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy unworthy the head of a civilized nation.	He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, destruction and tyranny already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy *scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages and totally* unworthy the head of a civilized nation.
He has constrained our fellow-citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.	Not altered.
He has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of the frontiers the merciless Indian savages whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions of *existence.*	He has *excited domestic insurrections among us and has* endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of the frontiers the merciless Indian savages whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.
He has excited treasonable insurrections of our fellow-citizens, with the allurements of forfeiture and confiscation of our property.	Struck out.
He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their	

transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of INFIDEL powers, is the warfare of the CHRISTIAN king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he also obtruded them; thus paying off former crimes committed against the LIBERTIES of one people with crimes which he urges them to commit against the LIVES of another.	Struck out.
In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms; our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injuries.	Not altered.
A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of a people *who mean to be free. Future ages will scarcely believe that the hardiness of one man adventured, within the short compass of twelve years only, to lay a foundation so broad and so undisguised for tyranny over a people fostered and fixed in principles of freedom.*	A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of a *free* people.
Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend *a* jurisdiction over *these our states.* We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here; *no one of which could warrant so strange a pretension; these were effected at the expense of our own blood and treasure, unassisted by the wealth or the strength of Great Britain; that in constituting indeed our several forms of government, we had adopted one common king; thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league and amity with them; but that submission to their parliament was no part of our constitution, nor ever in idea if history may be credited; and* we appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, *as well as to* the ties of our common kindred, to disavow these usurpations which *were likely to* interrupt our connexion and correspondence. They too have been deaf	Nor have we been wanting in attention, to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend *an unwarrantable* jurisdiction over *us.* We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here; we *have* appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, *and we have conjured them by* the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations which *would inevitably* interrupt our connexion and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. *We must therefore* acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our separation, *and hold them* as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

to the voice of justice and of consanguinity, *and when occasions have been given them by the regular course of their laws, of removing from their councils the disturbers of our harmony, they have by their free election re-established them in power. At this very time too, they are permitting their chief magistrate to send over not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch and foreign mercenaries to invade and destroy us. These facts have given the last stab to agonizing affection, and manly spirit bids us to renounce for ever these unfeeling brethren. We must endeavour to forget our former love for them, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends. We might have been a free and a great people together; but a communication of grandeur and of freedom, it seems, is below their dignity. Be it so, since they will have it. The road to happiness and to glory is open to us too. We will tread it apart from them, and* acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our *eternal* separation.

We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America in general congress assembled, do, in the name and by the authority of the good people of these *states, reject and renounce all allegiance and subjection to the kings of Great Britain, and all others who may hereafter claim by, through or under them; we utterly dissolve all political connexion which may heretofore have subsisted between us and the people or parliament of Great Britain; and finally we do assert and declare these colonies to be free and independent states,* and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.

And for the support of this declaration, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour.

We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America in general congress assembled, *appealing to the supreme judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions,* do in the name, and by the good people of these *colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these united colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connexion between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved;* and that as free and independent states they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.

And for the support of this declaration, *with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence,* we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour.

The words expunged from the original draft are distinguished by italics, as are the words that were introduced by congress.

NOTE—No. VII

"My reasons for this measure," said the Commander-in-chief in his letter to General Lee, ordering him to cross the Hudson, "and which I think must have weight with you, are, that the enemy are evidently changing the seat of war to this side of the North river; that this country, therefore, will expect the continental army to give what support they can; and, if disappointed in this, will cease to depend upon, or support a force by which no protection is given to them. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that at least an appearance of force should be made, to keep this state in connexion with the others. If that should not continue, it is much to be feared that its influence on Pennsylvania would be very considerable; and the public interests would be more and more endangered. Unless, therefore, some new event should occur, or some more cogent reason present itself, I would have you move over by the easiest and best passage. I am sensible your numbers will not be large, and that the movement may not perhaps be agreeable to your troops. As to the first, report will exaggerate them, and there will be preserved the appearance of an army, which will, at least, have the effect of encouraging the desponding here; and, as to the other, you will doubtless represent to them, that in duty and gratitude, their service is due wherever the enemy may make the greatest impression, or seem to intend to do so."

NOTE—No. VIII

In a postscript, it is stated, that an accurate return could not be obtained, but that from the best estimate he could form, the whole force in Jersey fit for duty was under three thousand; all of whom, except nine hundred and eighty-one, were militia, who stood engaged only until the last of that month. The continental troops under inoculation, including their attendants, amounted to about one thousand.

In a letter of the sixth of March to Governor Trumbull, calling on the state of Connecticut for two thousand militia to be marched to Peekskill, after complaining of the militia he had called from the southern states, who came and went as their own caprice might direct, he says, "I am persuaded, from the readiness with which you have ever complied with all my demands, that you will exert yourself in forwarding the aforementioned number of men, upon my bare request. But I hope you will be convinced of the necessity of the demand, when I tell you, in confidence, that after the 15th of this month, when the time of General Lincoln's militia expires, I shall be left with the remains of five Virginia regiments, not amounting to more than as many hundred men, and parts of two or three other continental battalions, all very weak. The remainder of the army will be composed of small parties of militia from this state and Pennsylvania, on whom little dependence can be put, as they come and go when they please. I have issued peremptory orders to every colonel in the regular service, to send in what men he has recruited, even if they amount to but one hundred to a regiment: if they would do this, it would make a considerable force upon the whole. The enemy must be ignorant of our numbers and situation, or they would never suffer us to remain unmolested; and I almost tax myself with imprudence in committing the secret to paper; not that I distrust you; of whose inviolable attachment I have had so many proofs; but for fear the letter should by any accident fall into other hands than those for which it is intended."

NOTE—No. IX

Justice to the unfortunate demands, that an extract from the correspondence between Generals Burgoyne and Gates on this subject should be inserted.

The British general had complained of the harsh treatment experienced by the provincial prisoners taken at Bennington, and requested that a surgeon from his army should be permitted to visit the wounded; and that he might be allowed to furnish them with necessaries and attendants. "Duty and principle," he added, "make me a public enemy to the Americans, who have taken up arms; but I seek to be a generous one; nor have I the shadow of resentment against any individual, who does not induce it by acts derogatory to those maxims, upon which all men of honour think alike." In answer to this letter, General Gates, who had just taken command of the

American army, said, "that the savages of America should, in their warfare, mangle and scalp the unhappy prisoners who fall into their hands is neither new nor extraordinary, but that the famous Lieutenant General Burgoyne, in whom the fine gentleman is united with the soldier and the scholar, should hire the savages of America to scalp Europeans, and the descendants of Europeans; nay more, that he should pay a price for each scalp so barbarously taken, is more than will be believed in Europe, until authenticated facts shall, in every gazette, confirm the truth of the horrid tale.

"Miss M'Crea, a young lady, lovely to the sight, of virtuous character, and amiable disposition, engaged to an officer of your army, was, with other women and children, taken out of a house near fort Edward, carried into the woods, and there scalped and mangled in a most shocking manner. Two parents with their six children, were all treated with the same inhumanity, while quietly resting in their once happy and peaceful dwelling. The miserable fate of Miss M'Crea was particularly aggravated, by being dressed to receive her promised husband; but met her murderer employed by you. Upwards of one hundred men, women and children, have perished by the hands of the ruffians to whom, it is asserted, you have paid the price of blood."

To this part of his letter, General Burgoyne replied, "I have hesitated, sir, upon answering the other paragraphs of your letter. I disdain to justify myself against the rhapsodies of fiction and calumny, which from the first of this contest, it has been an unvaried American policy to propagate, but which no longer imposes on the world. I am induced to deviate from this general rule, in the present instance, lest my silence should be construed an acknowledgment of the truth of your allegations, and a pretence be thence taken for exercising future barbarities by the American troops.

"By this motive and upon this only, I condescend to inform you, that I would not be conscious of the acts you presume to impute to me, for the whole continent of America, though the wealth of worlds was in its bowels, and a paradise upon its surface.

"It has happened, that all my transactions with the Indian nations, last year and this, have been clearly heard, distinctly understood, accurately minuted, by very numerous, and in many parts, very unprejudiced persons. So immediately opposite to the truth is your assertion that I have paid a price for scalps, that one of the first regulations established by me at the great council in May, and repeated and enforced, and invariably adhered to since, was, that the Indians should receive compensation for prisoners, because it would prevent cruelty; and that not only such compensation should be withheld, but a strict account demanded for scalps. These pledges of conquest, for such you well know they will ever esteem them, were solemnly and peremptorily prohibited to be taken from the wounded, and even the dying, and the persons of aged men, women, children, and prisoners, were pronounced sacred, even in an assault.

"In regard to Miss M'Crea, her fall wanted not the tragic display you have laboured to give it, to make it as sincerely abhorred and lamented by me, as it can be by the tenderest of her friends. The fact was no premeditated barbarity. On the contrary, two chiefs who had brought her off for the purpose of security, not of violence to her person, disputed which should be her guard, and in a fit of savage passion in one, from whose hands she was snatched, the unhappy woman became the victim. Upon the first intelligence of this event, I obliged the Indians to deliver the murderer into my hands, and though to have punished him by our laws, or principles of justice, would have been perhaps unprecedented, he certainly should have suffered an ignominious death, had I not been convinced from my circumstances and observation, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that a pardon under the terms which I presented, and they accepted, would be more efficacious than an execution, to prevent similar mischiefs.

"The above instance excepted, your intelligence respecting the cruelty of the Indians is false.

"You seem to threaten me with European publications, which affect me as little as any other threats you could make; but in regard to American publications, whether your charge against me, which I acquit you of believing, was penned *from* a gazette, or *for* a gazette, I desire and demand of you, as a man of honour, that should it appear in print at all this answer may follow it."

NOTE—No. X

Lord Suffolk, secretary of state, contended for the employment of Indians, in the war. "Besides its policy and necessity," his lordship said, "that the measure was also allowable on principle, for that it was perfectly justifiable to use all the means that God and nature had put into our hands."

This moving the indignation of Lord Chatham, he suddenly rose, and gave full vent to his feelings in one of the most extraordinary bursts of eloquence that the pen of history has recorded: "I am astonished," exclaimed his lordship, "shocked to hear such principles confessed; to hear them avowed in this house or even this country. My lords, I did not intend to have encroached again on your attention, but I can not repress my indignation. I feel myself impelled to speak. My lords, we are called upon as members of this house, as men, as christians, to protest against such horrible barbarity. That God and nature had put into our hands! what ideas of God and nature that noble lord may entertain I know not, but I know that such detestable principles are equally abhorrent to religion and humanity. What, to attribute the sacred sanction of God and nature to the massacres of the Indian scalping knife! to the cannibal savage, torturing, murdering, devouring, drinking the blood of his mangled victims! such notions shock every precept of morality, every feeling of humanity, every sentiment of honour. These abominable principles and this more abominable avowal of them, demand the most decisive indignation. I call upon that right reverend and this most learned bench to vindicate the religion of their God, to support the justice of their country. I call upon the bishops to interpose the unsullied sanctity of their lawn, upon the judges to interpose the purity of their ermine, to save us from this pollution. I call upon the honour of your lordships, to reverence the dignity of your ancestors, and to maintain your own. I call upon the spirit and humanity of my country, to vindicate the national character. I invoke the genius of the constitution. From the tapestry that adorns these walls, the immortal ancestor of this noble lord, frowns with indignation at the disgrace of his country. In vain did he defend the liberty, and establish the religion of Britain against the tyranny of Rome, if these worse than popish cruelties and inquisitorial practices are endured among us. To send forth the merciless cannibal thirsting for blood!—against whom?—Your protestant brethren—to lay waste their country, to desolate their dwellings, and extirpate their race and name, by the aid and instrumentality of these horrible hell-hounds of war! Spain can no longer boast pre-eminence of barbarity. She armed herself with blood-hounds to extirpate the wretched natives of Mexico, but we more ruthless, loose these dogs of war against our countrymen in America, endeared to us by every tie that should sanctify humanity. My lords, I solemnly call upon your lordships, and upon every order of men in the state, to stamp upon this infamous procedure the indelible stigma of the public abhorrence. More particularly I call upon the holy prelates of our religion to do away this iniquity; let them perform a lustration to purify their country from this deep and deadly sin. My lords, I am old and weak, and at present unable to say more, but my feelings and indignation were too strong to have said less. I could not have slept this night in my bed, nor reposed my head upon my pillow, without giving this vent to my eternal abhorrence of such enormous and preposterous principles."

NOTE—No. XI

The following are the letters which passed between the two generals on this subject

Albany, December 18, 1777.

Sir,—I shall not attempt to describe what, as a private gentleman, I can not help feeling, on representing to my mind the disagreeable situation which confidential letters, when exposed to public inspection, may place an unsuspecting correspondent in; but, as a public officer, I conjure your excellency, to give me all the assistance you can, in tracing out the author of the infidelity, which put extracts from General Conway's letters to me into your hands. Those letters have been stealingly copied; but, which of them, when, or by whom, is to me, as yet, an unfathomable secret.

There is not one officer in my suite, or amongst those who have a free access to me upon whom I could, with the least justification to myself, fix the suspicion; and yet, my uneasiness may deprive me of the usefulness of the worthiest men. It is, I believe in your excellency's power to do me, and the United States, a very important service, by detecting a wretch who may betray me, and capitally injure the very operations under your immediate direction. For this reason, sir, I beg your excellency will favour me with the proofs you can procure to that effect. But, the crime being, eventually so important, that the least loss of time may be attended with the worst consequences; and, it being unknown to me whether the letter came to you from a member of congress, or from an officer, I shall have the honour of transmitting a copy of this to the president, that congress may, in concert with your excellency, obtain, as soon as possible, a discovery which so deeply affects the safety of the states. Crimes of that magnitude ought not to remain unpunished.

I have the honour to be.
Sir,
With the greatest respect,
Your excellency's most humble
and most obedient servant,
HORATIO GATES.

His excellency General Washington.

Valley Forge, January 4, 1778.

Sir,—Your letter of the 18th ultimo, came to my hands a few days ago, and to my great surprise informed me, that a copy of it had been sent to congress, for what reason, I find myself unable to account; but, as some end doubtless was intended to be answered by it, I am laid under the disagreeable necessity of returning my answer through the same channel, lest any member of that honourable body should harbour an unfavourable suspicion of my having practised some indiscreet means to come at the contents of the confidential letters between you and General Conway.

I am to inform you then, that **********, on his way to congress in the month of October last, fell in with Lord Stirling at Reading; and, not in confidence that I ever understood, informed his aid-de-camp, Major M'Williams, that General Conway had written thus to you, "heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors[1] would have ruined it." Lord Stirling, from motives of friendship, transmitted the account with this remark. "The enclosed was communicated by ********** to Major M'Williams; such wicked duplicity of conduct I shall always think it my duty to detect."

In consequence of this information, and without having any thing more in view, than merely to show that gentleman that I was not unapprised of his intriguing disposition, I wrote him a letter in these words.

"Sir, a letter which I received last night contained the following paragraph.

"In a letter from General Conway to General Gates, he says, heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors would have ruined it. I am, sir, &c."

Neither the letter, nor the information which occasioned it, was ever, directly, or indirectly, communicated by me to a single officer in this army (out of my own family) excepting the Marquis de Lafayette, who having been spoken to on the subject, by General Conway, applied for, and saw, under injunctions of secrecy, the letter which contained this information; so desirous was I of concealing every matter that could, in its consequences, give the smallest interruption to the tranquillity of this army, or afford a gleam of hope to the enemy by dissensions therein.

Thus, sir, with an openness and candour, which I hope will ever characterise and mark my conduct, have I complied with your request. The only concern I feel upon the occasion, finding how matters stand, is, that in doing this, I have necessarily been obliged to name a gentleman, who, I am persuaded, (although I never exchanged a word with him upon the subject) thought he was rather doing an act of justice, than committing an act of infidelity; and sure I am, that, until Lord Stirling's letter came to my hands, I never knew that General Conway, (whom I viewed in the light of a stranger to you) was a correspondent of yours, much less did I suspect that I was the subject of your confidential letters. Pardon me then for adding, that, so far from conceiving that the safety of the states can be affected, or in the smallest degree injured, by a discovery of this kind, or that I should be called upon in such solemn terms to point out the author, that I considered the information as coming from yourself, and given with a friendly view to forewarn, and consequently forearm me, against a secret enemy, or in other words, a dangerous incendiary, in which character sooner or later, this country will know General Conway. But, in this, as well as other matters of late, I have found myself mistaken. I am, sir,

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[1] One of whom, by the by, he was.

Your most obedient servant,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

To Major General Gates.

NOTE—No. XII

During the existence of this faction, an attempt appears to have been made to alienate the affections of the leading political personages in the states from the commander-in-chief. The following letters exhibit a very unsuccessful effort of this sort, which was made on Governor Henry, of Virginia, by a gentleman not supposed to be a member of congress from that state.

Williamsburgh, February 20, 1778.

Dear Sir,—You will no doubt be surprised at seeing the enclosed letter, in which the encomiums bestowed on me are as undeserved, as the censures aimed at you are unjust. I am sorry there should be one man who counts himself my friend, who is not yours.

Perhaps I give you needless trouble in handing you this paper. The writer of it may be too insignificant to deserve any notice. If I knew this to be the case, I should not have intruded on your time, which is so precious. But there may possibly be some scheme or party forming to your prejudice. The enclosed leads to such a suspicion. Believe me, sir, I have too high a sense of the obligations America has to you, to abet or countenance so unworthy a proceeding. The most exalted merit hath ever been found to attract envy. But I please myself with the hope, that the same fortitude and greatness of mind which have hitherto braved all the difficulties and dangers inseparable from your station, will rise superior to every attempt of the envious partisan.

I really can not tell who is the writer of this letter, which not a little perplexes me. The hand writing is altogether strange to me.

To give you the trouble of this, gives me pain. It would suit my inclination better, to give you some assistance in the great business of the war. But I will not conceal any thing from you, by which you may be affected, for I really think your personal welfare and the happiness of America are intimately connected. I beg you will be assured of that high regard and esteem with which I ever am,

Dear sir,
Your affectionate friend and very humble servant,

P. HENRY.

His excellency General Washington.

(*Letter enclosed in the preceding.*)

Yorktown, January 12, 1778.

Dear Sir,—The common danger of our country first brought you and me together. I recollect with pleasure the influence of your conversation and eloquence upon the opinions of this country in the beginning of the present controversy. You first taught us to shake off our idolatrous attachment to royalty, and to oppose its encroachments upon our liberties with our very lives. By these means you saved us from ruin. The independence of America is the offspring of that liberal spirit of thinking, and acting, which followed the destruction of the sceptres of kings and the mighty power of Great Britain.

But, sir, we have only passed the Red Sea. A dreary wilderness is still before us, and unless a Moses or a Joshua are raised up in our behalf, we must perish before we reach the promised land. We have nothing to fear from our enemies on the way. General Howe, it is true, has taken Philadelphia; but he has only changed his prison. His dominions are bounded on all sides by his outsentries. America can only be undone by herself. She looks up to her councils and arms for protection; but alas! what are they? her representation in congress dwindled to only twenty-one members —her Adams—her Wilson—her Henry, are no more among them. Her councils weak—and partial remedies applied constantly for universal diseases. Her army—what is it? a major general belonging to it called it a few days ago in my hearing a *mob.* Discipline unknown or *wholly* neglected. The quartermaster and commissary's departments filled with idleness, ignorance and peculation—our hospitals crowded with six thousand sick, but half provided with necessaries or accommodations, and more dying in them in one month, than perished in the field during the whole of the last campaign.

The money depreciating without any effectual measures being taken to raise it—the country distracted with the Don Quixote attempts to regulate the prices of provisions, an *artificial* famine created by it, and a *real* one dreaded from it. The spirit of the people failing through a more intimate acquaintance with the causes of our misfortunes—many submitting daily to General Howe, and more wishing to do it, only to avoid the calamities which threaten our country. But is our case desperate? by no means. We have wisdom, virtue, and strength *eno'* to save us if they could be called into action. The northern army has shown us what Americans are capable of doing with A GENERAL at their head. The spirit of the southern army is no ways inferior to the spirit of the northern. A Gates—a Lee, or a Conway would, in a few weeks, render them an irresistible body of men. The last of the above officers has accepted of the new office of inspector general of our army, in order to reform abuses—but the remedy is only a palliative one. In one of his letters to a friend he says, "a great and good God hath decreed America to be free—or the ********* and weak counsellors would have ruined her long ago"—you may rest assured of *each* of the facts related in this letter. The author of it is one of your Philadelphia friends. A hint of his name, if found out by the hand writing, must not be mentioned to your most intimate friend. Even the letter *must* be thrown in the fire. But some of its contents ought to be made public in order to awaken, enlighten, and alarm our country. I rely upon your prudence, and am, dear sir, with my usual attachment to *you,* and to our beloved independence.

Yours, sincerely.

His excellency P. Henry.

Williamsburgh, March 5, 1778.

DEAR SIR,—By an express which Colonel Finnie sent to camp, I enclosed you an anonymous letter, which I hope got safe to hand. I am anxious to hear something that will serve to explain the strange affair, which I am now informed is taken up, respecting you. Mr. Custis has just paid us a visit, and by him I learn sundry particulars concerning General Mifflin, that much surprise me. It is very hard to trace the schemes and windings of the enemies to America. I really thought that man its friend: however, I am too far from him to judge of his present temper.

While you face the armed enemies of our liberty in the field, and, by the favour of God, have been kept unhurt, I trust your country will never harbour in her bosom the miscreant who would ruin her best supporter. I wish not to flatter; but when arts unworthy honest men are used to defame and traduce you, I think it not amiss, but a duty, to assure you of that estimation in which the public hold you. Not that I think any testimony I can bear, is necessary for your support, or private satisfaction, for a bare recollection of what is past must give you sufficient pleasure in every circumstance of life. But I can not help assuring you, on this occasion, of the high sense of gratitude which all ranks of men, in this your native country, bear to you. It will give me sincere pleasure to manifest my regards, and render my best services to you or yours. I do not like to make a parade of these things, and I know you are not fond of it; however, I hope the occasion will plead my excuse.

The assembly have at length empowered the executive here to provide the Virginia troops serving with you, with clothes, &c. I am making provision accordingly, and hope to do something towards it. Every possible assistance from government is afforded the commissary of provisions, whose department has not been attended to. It was taken up by me too late to do much. Indeed the load of business devolved on me is too great to be managed well. A French ship, mounting thirty guns, that has been long chased by the English cruisers, has got into Carolina, as I hear last night.

Wishing you all possible felicity, I am, my dear sir,
Your ever affectionate friend,
and very humble servant, P. HENRY.

His excellency General Washington.

Valley Forge, March 27, 1778.

Dear Sir,—About eight days past, I was honoured with your favour of the 20th ultimo.

Your friendship, sir, in transmitting me the anonymous letter you had received, lays me under the most grateful obligations; and, if any thing could give a still further claim to my acknowledgments, it is the very polite and delicate terms in which you have been pleased to make the communication.

I have ever been happy in supposing that I held a place in your esteem, and the proof of it you have afforded on this occasion makes me peculiarly so. The favourable light in which you hold me is truly flattering, but I should feel much regret if I thought the happiness of America so intimately connected with my personal welfare, as you so obligingly seem to consider it. All I can say, is, that she has ever had, and, I trust, she ever will have, my honest exertions to promote her interest. I can not hope that my services have been the best; but my heart tells me that they have been the best that I could render.

That I may have erred in using the means in my power for accomplishing the objects of the arduous, exalted station with which I am honoured, I can not doubt; nor do I wish my conduct to be exempted from the reprehension it may deserve. Error is the portion of humanity, and to censure it, whether committed by this or that public character, is the prerogative of freemen. * * * * * *

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This is not the only secret insidious attempt that has been made to wound my reputation. There have been others equally base, cruel, and ungenerous; because conducted with as little frankness and proceeding from views perhaps as personally interested.

I am, dear sir, &c.
GEO. WASHINGTON.

To his excellency Patrick Henry, esquire, Governor of Virginia.

Camp, March 28, 1778.

Dear Sir,—Just as I was about to close my letter of yesterday, your favour of the fifth instant came to hand.

I can only thank you again, in the language of the most undissembled gratitude, for your friendship: and assure you, the indulgent disposition which Virginia in particular, and the states in general entertain towards me, gives me the most sensible pleasure. The approbation of my country is what I wish; and, as far as my abilities and opportunity will permit, I hope I shall endeavour to deserve it. It is the highest reward to a feeling mind; and happy are they who so conduct themselves as to merit it.

The anonymous letter with which you were pleased to favour me, was written by **********, so far as I can judge from a similitude of hands. * * *

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My caution to avoid any thing that could injure the service, prevented me from communicating, except to a very few of my friends, the intrigues of a faction which I know was formed against me, since it might serve to publish our internal dissensions but their own restless zeal to advance their views has too clearly betrayed them, and made concealment on my part fruitless. I can not precisely mark the extent of their views, but it appeared in general, that General Gates was to be exalted on the ruin of my reputation and influence. This I am authorized to say from undeniable facts in my own possession, from publications the evident scope of which could not be mistaken, and from private detractions industriously circulated. ******, it is commonly supposed, bore the second part in the cabal; and General Conway, I know, was a very active and malignant partisan; but I have good reason to believe that their machinations have recoiled most sensibly upon themselves.

I am, dear sir, &c.

GEO. WASHINGTON.

His excellency Patrick Henry, esquire, Governor of Virginia.

The following extract is taken from a letter written about the same time to a gentleman in New England, who had expressed some anxious apprehensions occasioned by a report that the commander-in-chief had determined to resign his station in the army:

"I can assure you that no person ever heard me drop an expression that had a tendency to resignation. The same principles that led me to embark in the opposition to the arbitrary claims of Great Britain, operate with additional force at this day; nor is it my desire to withdraw my services while they are considered of importance in the present contest; but to report a design of this kind, is among the arts, which those who are endeavouring to effect a change are practising to bring it to pass. I have said, and I still do say, that there is not an officer in the service of the United States, that would return to the sweets of domestic life with more heartfelt joy than I should. But I would have this declaration accompanied by these sentiments, that while the public are satisfied with my endeavours, I mean not to shrink from the cause; but the moment her voice, not that of faction, calls upon me to resign, I shall do it with as much pleasure as ever the wearied traveller retired to rest."

NOTE—No. XIII

The following is an extract of a letter addressed on this occasion by General Washington to congress:

"Though I sincerely commiserate the misfortune of General Lee, and feel much for his present unhappy situation; yet, with all possible deference to the opinion of congress, I fear that their resolutions will not have the desired effect, are founded in impolicy, and will, if adhered to, produce consequences of an extensive and melancholy nature.

"Retaliation is certainly just, and sometimes necessary, even where attended with the severest penalties: but when the evils which may, and must result from it, exceed those intended to be redressed, prudence and policy require that it should be avoided.

"Having premised thus much, I beg leave to examine the justice and expediency of it in the instance before us. From the best information I have been able to obtain, General Lee's usage has not been so disgraceful and dishonourable, as to authorize the treatment decreed to these gentlemen, was it not prohibited by many other important considerations. His confinement, I believe, has been more rigorous than has been generally experienced by the rest of our officers, or those of the enemy who have been in our possession; but if the reports received on that head be true, he has been provided with a decent apartment, and with most things necessary to render him comfortable. This is not the case with one of the officers comprehended in the resolves, if his letter, of which a copy is transmitted, deserves your credit. Here retaliation seems to have been prematurely begun, or to speak with more propriety, severities have been, and are exercised towards Colonel Campbell, not justified by any that General Lee has yet received.

"In point of policy, and under the present situation of our affairs, most surely the doctrine can not be supported. The balance of prisoners is greatly against us, and a general regard to the happiness of the whole should mark our conduct. Can we imagine that our enemies will not mete the same punishments, the same indignities, the same cruelties, to those belonging to us in their possession, that we impose on theirs? why should we suppose them to have more humanity than we possess ourselves? or why should an ineffectual attempt to relieve the distresses of one brave man, involve many more in misery? At this time, however disagreeable the fact may be, the enemy have in their power, and subject to their call, near three hundred officers belonging to the army of the United States. In this number there are some of high rank, and the most of them are men of bravery and of merit. The quota of theirs in our hands bears no proportion, not being more than fifty. Under these circumstances, we certainly should do no act to draw upon the gentlemen belonging to us, and who have already suffered a long captivity, greater punishments than they now experience. If we should, what will be their feelings, and those of their numerous and extensive connexions? Suppose the treatment prescribed for the Hessian officers should be pursued, will it not establish what the enemy have been aiming to effect by every artifice, and the grossest misrepresentations? I mean, an opinion of our enmity towards them, and of the cruel conduct they experience when they fall into our hands; a prejudice which we, on our part, have heretofore thought it politic to suppress, and to root out by every act of kindness and of lenity. It certainly will. The Hessians will hear of the punishments with all the circumstances of heightened exaggeration, and would feel the injury without investigating the cause, or reasoning upon the justice of it. The mischiefs which may, and must inevitably flow from the execution of the resolves, appear to be endless and innumerable."

NOTE—No. XIV

The following petition addressed to Governor Livingston, will furnish some evidence of the situation to which that part of Jersey was reduced.

To his excellency William Livingston, esquire, governor, captain general, and commander-in-chief in and over the state of New Jersey and the territories thereunto belonging in America, chancellor and ordinary in the same—the humble petition of the officers, civil and military, whose names are hereunto subscribed,

Showeth,—That a large detachment of the British army, a few weeks ago, made an invasion into the lower counties of this state on Delaware, and plundered a few of the inhabitants. That at present a large detachment are invading them a second time. That the enemy in this second incursion, have, as we have been credibly informed, by the express orders of Colonel Mawhood, the commanding officer, bayoneted and butchered in the most inhuman manner, a number of the militia who have unfortunately fallen into their hands. That Colonel Mawhood immediately after the massacre, in open letters, sent to both officers and privates by a flag, had the effrontery to insult us with a demand, that we should lay down our arms, and if not, threatened to burn, destroy, and lay the whole country waste, and more especially the property of a number of our most distinguished men, whom he named. That he has since put his threat into execution, in one instance, by burning one of the finest dwelling houses in Salem county, and all the other buildings on the same farm, the property of Colonel Benjamin Home. That plunder, rapine, and devastation in the most fertile and populous parts of these counties, widely mark their footsteps wherever they go. That they are spreading disaffection, they are using every possible means to corrupt the minds of the people, who, within their lines, have so little virtue as to purchase from them.

That we are in no state of defence. That we are so exposed by reason of our situation, that some of our officers, civil and military, have moved out of the counties for safety. That our militia, during the last winter, have been so fatigued out by repeated calls and continued service, and disaffection is now so widely diffused, that very few can be called out, in some places, none. That we have no troops of light horse regularly embodied, there is a scarcity of small arms among us, and no field pieces. That in these two incursions, we have very sensibly felt the want of field pieces and artillery men, that the number of us assembled is so small, that though we should use the greatest conduct and bravery, we could only provoke, not injure our enemy.

That the extent of our country is so great, that our small number of men fatigued out, indifferently armed and without field pieces, can not defend it. That, as Delaware runs all along those counties, we are liable to be attacked in numberless places.

That the acquisition of these counties would be of great advantage to the enemy. That they could nearly maintain their whole army a campaign by the plunder, forage, and assistance they could draw from them. That although the United States might not need them, yet it might perhaps be adviseable to defend them, to prevent the advantage the enemy might receive from them. That our riches, and former virtue, make us a prey to an enemy, whose tender mercies are cruelties.

That in short, our situation is beyond description deplorable. That the powers civil and military are daily relaxing, and disaffection prevailing. That we can neither stay at our houses, go out, nor come in with safety. That we can neither plough, plant, sew, reap nor gather. That we are fast falling into poverty, distress, and into the hands of our enemy. That unless there can be sent to our relief and assistance a sufficient body of standing troops, we must be under the disagreeable necessity of leaving the country to the enemy, and removing ourselves and families to distant places for safety. That although the present detachment may be fled and gone, before the relief reaches us, yet a body of troops are necessary for our protection, as long as the enemy possess Philadelphia. And these are the sentiments not only of us the subscribers, but of all the rest of the officers civil and military, and other the good subjects of this state in these counties.

NOTE—No. XV

The following is the report made by the committee:

"January 1, 1779. The committee appointed to confer with the commander-in-chief on the operations of the next campaign, report, that the plan proposed by congress for the emancipation of Canada, in co-operation with an army from France, was the principal subject of the said conference.

That, impressed with a strong sense of the injury and disgrace which must attend an infraction of the proposed stipulations, on the part of these states, your committee have taken a general view of our finances, of the circumstances of our army, of the magazines of clothes, artillery, arms and ammunition, and of the provisions in store, and which can be collected in season.

Your committee have also attentively considered the intelligence and observations communicated to them by the Commander-in-chief, respecting the number of troops and strong holds of the enemy in Canada; their naval force, and entire command of the water communication with that country—the difficulties, while they possess such signal advantages, of penetrating it with an army by land—the obstacles which are to be surmounted in acquiring a naval superiority—the hostile temper of many of the surrounding Indian tribes towards these states, and above all the uncertainty whether the enemy will not persevere in their system of harassing and distressing our sea-coast and frontiers by a predatory war.

That on the most mature deliberation, your committee can not find room for a well grounded presumption that these states will be able to perform their part of the proposed stipulations. That in a measure of such moment, calculated to call forth, and direct to a single object a considerable portion of the force of our ally, which may otherwise be essentially employed, nothing else than the highest probability of success could justify congress in making the proposition.

Your committee are therefore of opinion that the negotiation in question, however desirable, and interesting, should be deferred until circumstances render the co-operation of these states more certain, practicable, and effectual.

That the minister plenipotentiary of these states at the court of Versailles, the minister of France in Pennsylvania, and the minister of France, be respectively informed that the operations of the next campaign must depend on such a variety of contingencies to arise, as well from our own internal circumstances and resources, as the progress and movements of our enemy, that time alone can mature and point out the plan which ought to be pursued. That congress, therefore, can not, with a degree of confidence answerable to the magnitude of the object, decide on the practicability of their co-operating the next campaign, in an enterprise for the emancipation of Canada; that every preparation in our power will nevertheless be made for acting with vigour against the common enemy, and every favourable incident embraced with alacrity, to facilitate, and hasten the freedom and independence of Canada, and her union with these states—events which congress, from motives of policy with respect to the United States, as well as of affection for their Canadian brethren, have greatly at heart."

Mr. de Sevelinges in his introduction to Botta's History, recites the private instructions given to Mr. Girard on his mission to the United States. One article was, "to avoid entering into any formal engagement relative to Canada and other English possessions which congress proposed to conquer." Mr. de Sevelinges adds that "the policy of the cabinet of Versailles viewed the possession of those countries, especially of Canada by England, as a principle of useful inquietude and vigilance to the Americans. The neighbourhood of a formidable enemy must make them feel more sensibly the price which they ought to attach to the friendship and support of the king of France."

The author has reason to believe that this policy was known to the Marquis de Lafayette when his devotion to the interests of the United States induced him to add his influence to their solicitations for aid to this enterprise.

NOTE—No. XVI

A letter to President Reed of Pennsylvania from which the following extracts are taken, is selected from many others written with the same view.

Morristown, May 28th, 1780.

Dear Sir,—I am much obliged to you for your favour of the 23d. Nothing could be more necessary than the aid given by your state towards supplying us with provisions. I assure you, every idea you can form of our distresses, will fall short of the reality. There is such a combination of circumstances to exhaust the patience of the soldiery, that it begins at length to be worn out, and we see in every line of the army, the most serious features of mutiny and sedition: all our departments, all our operations are at a stand; and unless a system very different from that which has for a long time prevailed, be immediately adopted throughout the states, our affairs must soon become desperate beyond the possibility of recovery. If you were on the spot, my dear sir, if you could see what difficulties surround us on every side, how unable we are to administer to the most ordinary calls of the service, you would be convinced that these expressions are not too strong: and that we have every thing to dread: Indeed I have almost ceased to hope. The country in general is in such a state of insensibility and indifference to its interests, that I dare not flatter myself with any change for the better.

The committee of congress in their late address to the several states, have given a just picture of our situation. I very much doubt its making the desired impression; and if it does not, I shall consider our lethargy as incurable. The present juncture is so interesting, that if it does not produce correspondent exertions, it will be a proof, that motives of honour, public good, and even self-preservation, have lost their influence upon our minds. This is a decisive moment, one of the most, I will go further and say, the most important America has seen. The court of France has made a glorious effort for our deliverance, and if we disappoint its intentions by our supineness, we must become contemptible in the eyes of all mankind; nor can we, after that, venture to confide that our allies will persist in an attempt to establish what it will appear we want inclination or ability to assist them in.

Every view of our own circumstances ought to determine us to the most vigorous efforts; but there are considerations of another kind, that should have equal weight. The combined fleets of France and Spain last year were greatly superior to those of the enemy; the enemy nevertheless sustained no material damage, and at the close of the campaign gave a very important blow to our allies. This campaign, the difference between the fleets, from every account I have been able to collect, will be inconsiderable: indeed it is far from clear that there will be an equality. What are we to expect will be the case if there should be another campaign? In all probability the advantage would be on the side of the English, and then what would become of America? We ought not to deceive ourselves. The maritime resources of Great Britain are more substantial and real than those of France and Spain united. Her commerce is more extensive than that of both her rivals; and it is an axiom, that the nation which has the most extensive commerce will always have the most powerful marine. Were this argument less convincing, the fact speaks for itself: her progress in the course of the last year is an incontestable proof.

"It is true France in a manner created a fleet in a very short space, and this may mislead us in the judgment we form of her naval abilities. But if they bore any comparison with those of Great Britain, how comes it to pass, that with all the force of Spain added, she has lost so much ground in so short a time, as now to have scarcely a superiority. We should consider what was done by France, as a violent and unnatural effort of the government, which, for want of sufficient foundation, can not continue to operate proportionable effects.

"In modern wars, the longest purse must chiefly determine the event. I fear that of the enemy will be found to be so. Though the government is deeply in debt and of course poor, the nation is rich, and their riches afford a fund which will not be easily exhausted. Besides, their system of public credit is such, that it is capable of greater exertions than that of any other nation. Speculatists have been a long time foretelling its downfall; but we see no symptoms of the catastrophe being very near I am persuaded it will at least last out the war.

"France is in a very different position. The abilities of the present financier, have done wonders; by a wise administration of the revenues, aided by advantageous loans, he has avoided the necessity of additional taxes. But I am well informed if the war continues another campaign, he will be obliged to have recourse to the taxes usual in time of war, which are very heavy, and which the people of France are not in a condition to endure for any length of time. When this necessity commences, France makes war on ruinous terms, and England, from her individual wealth, will find much greater facilities in supplying her exigencies.

"Spain derives great wealth from her mines, but it is not so great as is generally imagined. Of late years the profit to government is essentially diminished. Commerce and industry are the best mines of a nation; both which are wanted by her. I am told her treasury is far from being so well filled as we have flattered ourselves. She is also much divided on the propriety of the war. There is a strong party against it. The temper of the nation is too sluggish to admit of great exertions; and though the courts of the two kingdoms are closely linked together, there never has been in any of their wars, a perfect harmony of measures, nor has it been the case in this; which has already been no small detriment to the common cause.

"I mention these things to show that the circumstances of our allies, as well as our own, call for peace, to obtain which we must make one great effort this campaign.

The present instance of the friendship of the court of France, is attended with every circumstance that can render it important and agreeable, that can interest our gratitude or fire our emulation. If we do our duty we may even hope to make the campaign decisive of the contest. But we must do our duty in earnest, or disgrace and ruin will attend us. I am sincere in declaring a full persuasion that the succour will be fatal to us if our measures are not adequate to the emergency.

"Now, my dear sir, I must observe to you, that much will depend on the state of Pennsylvania. She has it in her power to contribute, without comparison, more to our success, than any other state, in the two essential articles of flour and transportation. I speak to you in the language of frankness, and as a friend. I do not mean to make any insinuations unfavourable to the state. I am aware of the embarrassment the government labours under from the open opposition of one party and the underhand intrigues of another. I know that with the best dispositions to promote the public service, you have been obliged to move with circumspection. But this is a time to hazard, and to take a tone of energy and decision. All parties but the disaffected will acquiesce in the necessity and give their support.

"The matter is reduced to a point. Either Pennsylvania must give us all we ask, or we can undertake nothing. We must renounce every idea of co-operation, and must confess to our allies that we look wholly to them for our safety. This will be a state of humiliation and bitterness against which the feelings of every good American ought to revolt. Yours I am convinced will, nor have I the least doubt, but that you will employ all your influence to animate the legislature and the people at large. The fate of these states hangs upon it. God grant we may be properly impressed with the consequences.

"I wish the legislature could be engaged to vest the executive with plenipotentiary powers. I should then expect every thing practicable from your abilities and zeal. This is not a time for formality and ceremony. The crisis in every point of view is extraordinary, and extraordinary expedients are necessary. I am decided in this opinion."

NOTE—No. XVII

André having been unquestionably a spy, and his sentence consequently just; and the plot in which he had engaged having threatened consequences the most fatal to America; his execution, had he been an ordinary person, would certainly have been viewed with cold indifference. But he was not an ordinary person. In a letter written at the time by Colonel Hamilton, who in genius, in candour, and in romantic heroism, did not yield to this unfortunate Englishman, the character of André is thus feelingly and elequently drawn. "There was something singularly interesting in the character and fortunes of André. To an excellent understanding, well improved by education and travel, he united a peculiar elegance of mind and manners, and the advantages of a pleasing person. It is said he possessed a pretty taste for the fine arts, and had himself attained some proficiency in poetry, music, and painting. His knowledge appeared without ostentation, and embellished by a diffidence that rarely accompanies so many talents and accomplishments, which left you to suppose more than appeared. His sentiments were elevated and inspired esteem, they had a softness that conciliated affection. His elocution was handsome, his address easy, polite, and insinuating. By his merit he had acquired the unlimited confidence of his general, and was making rapid progress in military rank and reputation. But in the height of his career, flushed with new hopes from the execution of a project the most beneficial to his party that could be devised, he is at once precipitated from the summit of prosperity, sees all the expectations of his ambition blasted, and himself ruined. The character I have given of him is drawn partly from what I saw of him myself, and partly from information. I am aware that a man of real merit is never seen in so favourable a light as through the medium of adversity. The clouds that surround him are so many shades that set off his good qualities. Misfortune cuts down little vanities, that in prosperous times, serve as so many spots in his virtues; and gives a tone to humanity that makes his worth more amiable.

"His spectators, who enjoy a happier lot, are less prone to detract from it through envy; and are much disposed by compassion to give the credit he deserves, and perhaps even to magnify it."

NOTE—No. XVIII

On the first of May, 1781, General Washington commenced a military journal. The following is a brief statement of the situation of the army at that time. "I begin at this epoch, a concise journal of military transactions, &c. I lament not having attempted it from the commencement of the war in aid of my memory: and wish the multiplicity of matter which continually surrounds me, and the embarrassed state of our affairs, which is momentarily calling the attention to perplexities of one kind or another, may not defeat altogether, or so interrupt my present intention and plan, as to render it of little avail.

"To have the clearer understanding of the entries which may follow, it would be proper to recite, in detail, our wants, and our prospects; but this alone would be a work of much time, and great magnitude. It may suffice to give the sum of them, which I shall do in a few words, viz:

"Instead of having the magazines filled with provisions, we have a scanty pittance scattered here and there in the different states.

"Instead of having our arsenals well supplied with military stores, they are poorly provided, and the workmen all leaving them.—Instead of having the various articles of field equipage in readiness to deliver, the quartermaster general is but now applying to the several states (as the dernier resort) to provide these things for their troops respectively. Instead of having a regular system of transportation established upon credit—or funds in the quartermaster's hands to defray the contingent expenses of it—we have neither the one or the other; and all that business, or a great part of it, being done by military impressment, we are daily and hourly oppressing the people, souring their tempers, and alienating their affections. Instead of having the regiments completed to the new establishments (and which ought to have been so by the of agreeably to the requisitions of congress, scarce any state in the union has, at this hour, one-eighth part of its quota in the field; and there is little prospect that I can see of ever getting more than half. In a word, instead of having every thing in readiness to take the field, we have nothing. And instead of having the prospect of a glorious offensive campaign before us, we have a bewildered and gloomy prospect of a defensive one; unless we should receive a powerful aid of ships, land troops and money from our generous allies: and these at present are too contingent to build upon."

NOTE—No. XIX

York in Virginia, 17th October, 1781, half past four, P.M.

Sir,—I have this moment been honoured with your excellency's letter dated this day. The time limited for sending my answer will not admit of entering into the details of articles, but the basis of my proposals will be, that the garrisons of York and Gloucester shall be prisoners of war with the customary honours; and for the convenience of the individuals which I have the honour to command, that the British shall be sent to Britain, and the Germans to Germany, under engagements not to serve against France, America, or their allies, until released or regularly exchanged. That all arms and public stores shall be delivered up to you, but that the usual indulgence of side arms to officers and of retaining private property shall be granted to officers and soldiers; and the interests of individuals in civil capacities, and connected with us, shall be attended to. If your excellency thinks that a continuance of the suspension of hostilities will be necessary to transmit your answer, I shall have no objection to the hour that you propose. I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

CORNWALLIS

His excellency General Washington, &c. &c. &c.

NOTE—No. XX

Head quarters before York, 18th October, 1781.

My Lord,—To avoid unnecessary discussions and delays, I shall at once, in answer to your lordship's letter of yesterday, declare the general basis upon which a definitive treaty of capitulation must take place. The garrison of York and Gloucester, including the seamen, as you propose, will be received prisoners of war. The condition annexed of sending the British and German troops to the parts of Europe to which they respectively belong, is inadmissible. Instead of this, they will be marched to such parts of the country as can most conveniently provide for their subsistence; and the benevolent treatment of prisoners, which is invariably observed by the Americans, will be extended to them. The same honours will be granted to the surrendering army, as were granted to the garrison of Charleston.

The shipping and boats in the two harbours, with all their guns, stores, tackling, furniture, and apparel, shall be delivered in their present state to an officer of the navy appointed to take possession of them.

The artillery, arms, accoutrements, military chest, and public stores of every denomination, shall be delivered unimpaired, to the heads of departments, to which they respectively belong.

The officers will be indulged in retaining their side arms, and the officers and soldiers may preserve their baggage and effects with this reserve, that property taken in the country will be reclaimed.

With regard to the individuals in civil capacities, whose interests your lordship wishes may be attended to, until they are more particularly described, nothing definitive can be settled.

I have to add, that I expect the sick and wounded will be supplied with their own hospital stores, and attended by British surgeons particularly charged with the care of them.

Your lordship will be pleased to signify your determination, either to accept or reject the proposals now offered, in the course of two hours from the delivery of this letter, that commissioners may be appointed to digest the articles of capitulation, or a renewal of hostilities may take place.

I have the honour to be, my lord, &c.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Lieutenant General Earl Cornwallis.

York, in Virginia, 18th October, 1781.

Sir,—I agree to open a treaty of capitulation upon the basis of the garrisons of York and Gloucester, including seamen, being prisoners of war without annexing the condition of their being sent to Europe; but I expect to receive a compensation in arranging the articles of capitulation for the surrender of Gloucester in its present state of defence.

I shall in particular desire that the Bonetta sloop of war, may be left entirely at my disposal from the hour the capitulation is signed, to receive an aid-de-camp to carry my despatches to Sir Henry Clinton and such soldiers as I may think proper to send as passengers in her, to be manned with fifty men of her own crew, and to be permitted to sail without examination when my despatches are ready; engaging on my part that the ship shall be brought back and delivered to you, if she escapes the dangers of the sea; that the crew and soldiers sent as passengers shall be accounted for in future exchanges as prisoners; that she shall carry off no officer without your consent, no public property of any kind; and I shall likewise desire that the traders and inhabitants may preserve their property, and that no person may be punished or molested for having joined the British troops.

If you choose to proceed to negotiation on these grounds, I shall appoint two field officers of my army to meet two officers from you at any time and place you think proper, to digest the articles of capitulation.• I have the honour to be, sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

CORNWALLIS.

His excellency General Washington, &c. &c. &c.

NOTE—No. XXI

Head quarters, 20th October, 1781.

Sɪʀ,—The surrender of York, from which so much glory and advantage are derived to the allies, and the honour of which belongs to your excellency, has greatly anticipated our most sanguine expectations. Certain of this event under your auspices, though unable to determine the time, I solicited your excellency's attention in the first conference with which you honoured me, to ulterior objects of decisive importance to the common sense. Although your excellency's answer on that occasion was unfavourable to my wishes, the unexpected promptness with which our operations have been conducted to their final success having gained us time, the defect of which was one of your excellency's principal objections, a perspective of the most extensive and happy consequences, engages me to renew my represntations.

Charleston, the principal maritime port of the British in the southern parts of the continent, the grand deposite and point of support for the present theatre of the war, is open to a combined attack, and might be carried with as much certainty as the place which has just surrendered.

This capture would destroy the last hope which induces the enemy to continue the war; for having experienced the impracticability of recovering the populous northern states, he has determined to confine himself to the defensive in that quarter, and to prosecute a most vigorous offensive in the south, with a view of conquering states, whose spare population and natural disadvantages render them infinitely less susceptible of defense; although their productions render them the most valuable in a commercial view. His naval superiority, previous to your excellency's arrival, gave him decisive advantages in the rapid transport of his troops and supplies: while the immense land marches of our succours, too tardy and expensive in every point of view, subjected us to be beaten in detail.

It will depend upon your excellency, therefore, to terminate the war, and enable the allies to dictate the law in a treaty. A campaign so glorious and so fertile in consequences, could be reserved only for the Count de Grasse.

It rarely happens that such a combination of means, as are in our hands at present, can be seasonably obtained by the most strenuous of human exertions.—A decisively superior fleet, the fortune and talents of whose commander overawe all the naval force that the most incredible efforts of the enemy have been able to collect; an army flushed with success, and demanding only to be conducted to new attacks; and the very season which is proper for operating against the points in question.

If upon entering into the detail of this expedition, your excellency should still determine it impracticable, there is an object which though subordinate to that above mentioned, is of capital importance to our southern operations, and may be effected at infinitely less expense; I mean the enemy's post at Wilmington in North Carolina. Circumstances require that I should at this period reinforce the southern army under General Greene. This reinforcement transported by sea under your excellency's convoy, would enable us to carry the post in question with very little difficulty, and would wrest from the British a point of support in North Carolina, which is attended with the most dangerous consequences to us, and would liberate another state. This object would require nothing more than the convoy of your excellency to the point of operation, and the protection of the debarkation.

I intreat your excellency's attention to the points which I have the honour of laying before you, and to be pleased at the same time to inform me what are your dispositions for a maritime force to be left on the American station.

I have the honour to be, &c.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

NOTE—No. XXII

Late in October an irruption was made into the country on the Mohawk, by Major Ross, at the head of about five hundred men, composed of regulars, rangers, and Indians. Colonel Willet, with between four and five hundred men, partly of the troops denominated levies, and partly militia, immediately marched in quest of them, and fell in with them at Johnstown, where they were slaughtering cattle, apparently unapprehensive of an enemy. Before showing himself, he detached Major Rowley of Massachusetts with the left wing to fall on the rear, while he should engage the front. On his appearance the British party retired to a neighbouring wood, and the American advance was just beginning to skirmish with them, when that whole wing, without any apparent cause, suddenly fled from the field, leaving a field-piece posted on a height in order to cover a retreat, to fall into the hands of the enemy. Fortunately for the party, Rowley appeared in the rear at this critical juncture, and regained what the right wing had lost. Night soon coming on, Major Ross retired further into the wood, and encamped on the top of a mountain. He seems after this skirmish to have been only intent on repassing the dreary wilderness in his rear, and securing his party; an object not to be accomplished without immense fatigue and great suffering, as Colonel Willet had cut off their return to their boats, and they were to retreat by the way of Buck island, or Oswegatchie. With a select part of his troops who were furnished with five days provisions, and about sixty Indians who had just joined him, and who, he said, "are the best cavalry for the service of the wilderness," he commenced a rapid pursuit, and in the morning of the 30th, at a ford on Canada creek, fell in with about forty whites and some Indians who were left in the rear to procure provisions. These were attacked and the greater number of them killed or taken, upon which the main body fled with such rapidity that the pursuit proved ineffectual. In the party at Canada creek was Major Walter Butler, the person who perpetrated the massacre at Cherry-valley. His entreaties for quarter were disregarded, and he fell the victim of that vengeance which his own savage temper had directed against himself.

End of Volume I

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